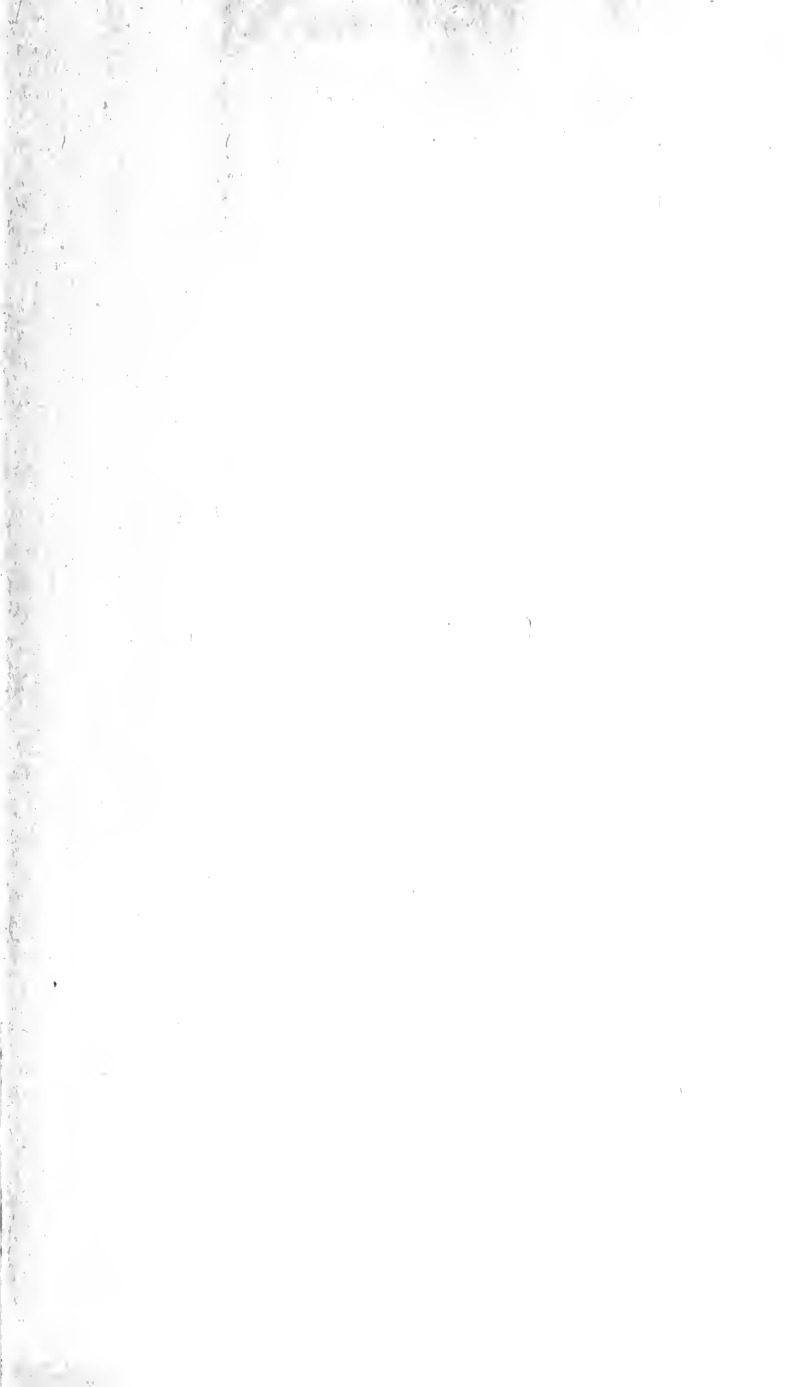




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ALBERT LUNEL;

OR,

THE CHÂTEAU OF LANGUEDOC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

LEBROUHAM & VALL

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THE CHÂTEAU.

CHAPTER I.

PROGRESS OF REVOLUTION.

ALBERT had reached, apparently, the latest period of his singular history ; but he had still more to relate than the time would now permit ; and after some conversation, which naturally arose out of the picture he had presented to his young friend of West Indian society, they separated with the design of again meeting in a few days, and then finishing the long narrative.

“ How is it in human nature,” said the Count before he took his departure, “ to witness, aye, or even to hear of such things—of the slave-mart, the slave-cargo, the accursed African ship—and not join in the natural expression, though of frightful rage, which you witnessed in the hurricane near Cape François ?

My blood alternately curdles and boils when I think of the cruelties inflicted on that unhappy race; and I feel as if nothing could grieve me less than some convulsion of society which should at once snap their chains." "Yes," said Albert, "the feeling may be natural, but it is also very unreflecting. Such a convulsion would be a frightful explosion, as fatal to the one colour as to the other. The whites would be overpowered by the vast numbers of the negroes; but these are ill-fitted for self-government; their very wrongs, the state they have been kept in, their habitual subjection, unfits them for enjoying freedom; and a scene of deplorable anarchy must succeed their violent emancipation and their extirpation of the whites." "Still," said the Count, "it is difficult to think of the slave-ship, and the blood-hound, and the cart-whip, and not say Welcome any event that can end such horrors." "As it might be natural," said Albert, "and yet would be very unreasonable, to wish for an earthquake which should destroy, or a deluge which should swallow up the islands, exterminating the suffering slaves with their oppressive masters. Mark well," he continued, "if I am averse to such violence, it is for the sake of the injured sufferers, not of the guilty wrong-doers. As

far as they are concerned, my feelings, even my principles, go along with you." "But the same thing," said Chatillon, "cannot be said of the Continent; of Virginia and Carolina, for example, where the same disproportion exists not between the two races, which makes any violent emancipation to be dreaded in the islands. Surely, if these Republicans who so shamefully, even against their most sacred principles, persist in holding a million of their fellow-creatures in chains, no feeling of compassion nor any notions of expediency should prevent us from desiring to see the catastrophe which must sooner or later result from their blind perseverance in the present wicked system. If all the slaves, leaving the whites alone, were to assert their freedom, and secure only as much of the land as would suffice for their support, who could either blame them, or pity their cruel masters?" "I own," said Albert, "that my sentiments do not differ widely from yours on this great matter. But one thing I will say,—should the Americans show a proper sense of justice and of consistency, by not only stopping the importation of slaves (this they must do for their own safety), but by framing measures which may pave the way for liberating those now in their country, I should not

be very anxious to hurry forward the moment of emancipation. I should be satisfied if I saw steps taken with decision for preparing to bring about, within a reasonable time, that happy consummation."

Chatillon found on leaving the hidden apartment, and returning to the inhabited rooms, that he had staid so long as to leave him little time for seeing his friends before dinner was announced. He saw all present in a state of silent alarm, the arrival of Ernest Deverell from Nismes having brought intelligence of serious disturbances broken out in Dauphiné. The riots were said to have been most formidable at Grenoble, where the Governor, the Duke de Tomnère, had been forced to save his life by giving up the keys of the garrison to the insurgents, and these had broken into his house and pillaged his fine cabinet. Accounts had also been received of riots at Rennes in Britany. There had been other disturbances in different places. Some of the company assembled at the Château were of opinion that these excesses might prove beneficial by rousing the government to put forth its strength. "No one," said M. La Croasse, "can for a moment doubt what would be the result of so unequal a conflict." It was, how-

ever, observed by Ernest, who had seen the Governor of Nismes, that a most alarming symptom had in one or two instances been lately exhibited; the military were with difficulty prevailed upon to act, and in one case had positively refused to take part against their fellow-citizens. This was in part ascribed to the troops having been engaged in the American war, but probably without ground. It was, however, quite certain that many of the officers, some of them men of rank, who served in the contest with the Republicans, had brought back high notions of liberty, which they were not slow to promulgate, with a pretty strong expression of hatred to arbitrary power. La Croasse himself could not deny that this formed a most alarming part of the case; but he still maintained that the sound part of the army, if used with vigour, would be sufficient to prevent further mischief, and above all to ward off the greatest of evils and of dangers too, he said, the making what concessions you may admit, and what concessions are in themselves just, to the violence of the lawless mob. "To them," said he, "nothing—to justice, and reason, and kindness, everything—should be the maxim; and in order to have a shelter behind which you can exercise this wise policy, begin

by putting down tumult, with a strong, that is an armed hand. After that, as much concession as you please, and as is right."

An event had happened shortly before these disturbances, which was considered of importance at the time, and still more on reflecting upon it afterwards. The Parliament, echoing the remonstrances of their brethren at Grenoble, had inveighed loudly against *lettres de cachet*, and called for the entire abolition of the power to issue them. The Queen and her party, seconded by the Count d'Artois, took this opportunity to press upon the King the necessity of violent measures; he had accordingly required the surrender of two obnoxious members, MM. Epresmenil and Monsambert. To enforce his demand, he surrounded the House with a body of troops, and the Colonel entering, asked which were the two members. The President starting up said, "Every man you see here is an Epresmenil and a Monsambert," intimating that all agreed in their sentiments. Such was the vacillation which followed this attempt at vigour that Colonel Degout was unable to obtain further instructions from the Court for nearly four and twenty hours after he made his report. Meanwhile the Parliament was locked

up, the troops surrounded it, the Colonel came again and threatened all who refused to obey, with the pains of treason. A dead silence was the only answer made; when the two members voluntarily surrendered themselves and were immediately sent to distant prisons, one as far as the Island in Provence where the man in the Iron Mask had formerly been confined. A vehement remonstrance of the Parliament was the immediate consequence; the King was plainly charged with a design to govern unconstitutionally by arbitrary power; and a fixed determination was expressed on behalf of the nation, never to suffer the laws to be trampled upon, or to respect the Royal authority unless it were exercised according to law and justice. The second meeting of the Notables, which quickly followed, led to further discontent with the Court, and the outrages in Britany and Dauphiné plainly showed that the provinces at the least shared in the excitement of Paris and its Parliament.

“When we lately discussed the policy and the conduct of the King,” said the Baron, “we made no allowance for the unfortunate influence of his family.”

“On that score,” the Marquess observed, “I can-

not possibly make any allowance at all. To yield to their entreaty what he refuses to his lawful, regular, and responsible advisers, or what his own deliberate judgment disapproves, is only another form of charging him with misconduct, if indeed it be not an aggravation of his offence. Mark, I am speaking your high language, which imputes to sovereigns as offences all their great errors." "But at least," said M. La Croasse, "we must allow something for the influence of one so connected with him as his Queen is, to say nothing of her fascinating personal qualities." "I hold," said the Baron, "that a man who would suffer a woman to govern him in such a situation as the king's, and in such a crisis as the present, is wholly unworthy of a throne." "What?" said Mme. de Chatillon, "and are we to be told that a woman, merely because she is a woman, must be regarded as a cypher, treated as a mere empty pageant of a court, brought into the ball-room, or the card-room, or the royal box at the theatre, by way ornament, and then be silenced when she would speak her mind on state-affairs, in which she has as deep a stake as any mortal breathing, with the insulting remark 'you are but a woman?'" "I crave your mercy," said he, "but I only was considering

that, there being certain most essential functions women never can perform, as sitting in council, holding office, commanding troops, and indeed our law barring the throne itself against them"—“But not the regency,” she quickly replied, “and I fancy Anne of Austria was about as able a governor as either her husband or her grandson. Besides, all you say—or nearly all—is applicable to certain professions whose members you yet allow to meddle with state-affairs—what say you to priests? They can neither command troops, nor act as judges, nor be governors of provinces; and yet both in France and Spain they have more power than most of the laity.” “Yes,” said Mme. de Bagnolles, “and I recollect an anecdote of our English King, James II., who, on the Spanish ambassador’s advising him rather to be counselled by his ministers than his priests, asked if the King of Spain did not go by the advice of his confessor. ‘He does,’ said the Spaniard, ‘and that is exactly the reason why our affairs go so badly.’”

The Countess here broke out in an enumeration of the empresses and queens who had distinguished themselves by talents for governing, and was extremely wroth with young Deverell for citing the old saying, that things prosper under queens better than

under kings, because men rule under those, women under these. She also was not a little irritated at the silence which the Baron kept during her dispute, in which she stood alone. He not only abstained, from the uneasiness which he laboured under on account of Emmeline, who was confined to her room that day by indisposition ; but he avoided joining the conversation on account of his fair idol herself, whom he had of late found it extremely difficult to deal with. If he opposed her, she would be angry in a covert and suppressed manner ; if he agreed with her, she would show an outright and open irritation. It seemed quite impossible to avoid giving her offence. She appeared to be ill at ease with herself ; and to visit upon others the consequences of her own indiscreet avowal of love ; but most of all upon him to whom it had been made, and who was its cause. Nothing, however, gave her more offence than his thwarting her in any place from tender care for her personal comfort or her safety. If he besought her not to expose herself to the air at sunset for fear of the inflammatory attack which such imprudence is apt to bring on ; if he anxiously warned her against driving a pair of half-broken horses, which the Chevalier had yoked to a light phaeton ; or if he would

only have her write her letters so early as not to be hurried for the post ; and when she was too late, if he offered to ride with them afterwards himself to the town—all these attentions, merely because they proceeded from a warm interest taken in whatever concerned her, seemed to pass for the fruits of some selfish suggestion, as if she mistook the Baron's care about her for a care about himself, merely because he preferred her ease to his own. But of all the offences which he could commit, the one most past forgiveness was any advice, or hint, how delicately soever conveyed, even if wrapt up in the language of devoted admiration, but which pointed to any error in her conduct. “ Might I venture, dearest friend, with the deepest respect,” he would say, trembling for the reception his admonition might meet, “ only thinking of yourself, and desiring that you may be as perfect in all other eyes as you are in mine,—might I venture to wish you would spare those taunts thrown out upon our amiable friend the Marchioness? You lack no praise for wit, no fame as a satirist.” “ Baron, I don't comprehend you,” was the instant reply. “ I suppose I am to have my opinion as well as other people.”—“ Pray, for God's sake, my dearest Countess, don't be so angry.”—“ I am not angry

at all, Baron ; I am only tired, and bored, and plagued to death with such stupid observations.”—
“But, dearest lady, I had but one motive or feeling—
anxious friendship, a constant regard for you, and desire to see you as lovely as you are fascinating.”
This put an end to all possibility of continuing the conversation : she vowed that it was treating her like a child, and declared that if there was anything she disliked more than every other, it was people taking the trouble of being friendly and anxious about her.

But a very untoward circumstance soon occurred ; or rather had, unknown either to the Baron or herself, occurred two months before, and was now first brought to her knowledge. Ernest Deverell had not for so long a time gazed upon her charms without being captivated, like all other gazers ; but having more self-confidence, and having also had so much success in the circles of Paris, he was less discouraged than others in what to them seemed a hopeless pursuit. His cleverness, his easy and polished manners, had made his professed admiration bearable and even palatable to her ; and as the slightest encouragement sufficed to raise hopes in him, a mere trifle, of no moment whatever, her asking him to drive her in his father’s open carriage, inspired him

with positive expectations of victory ; for this incident happened at a time when some coldness between her and the Baron gave Ernest's watchful eyes the notion of a quarrel having taken place, and even of all intercourse having ceased with his happy rival. The reception he met with was most cold and humiliating ; it was even contemptuous ; and the tone of the Countess was to be angry, and resent his advances as an insult to her position, her married state. The youth was piqued by the severity of her language, and the scorn which she evinced, and which plainly was not put on for the occasion ; he was thrown off his guard ; and in a moment of irritation he hinted plainly enough that he knew more than she could wish of her friendship for M. de Moulin. He dwelt on that "*friendship*" with a sneering emphasis ; this enraged the fair one beyond endurance ; she increased the bitterness of her speech towards him ; when he in a mock tender tone, and as if imitating her voice while he threw himself into her attitude, whispered tenderly the words "*My dearest friend,*" which she had so often felt she would give worlds to recall, but which she had always believed were only breathed in the Baron's ear. She screamed and grew pale. Her

anger suddenly fell, and terror only remained. Deverell, sincerely vexed at his own intemperance, tried to comfort and to soothe her. She eyed him as if she grudged him the air he breathed, and thought each moment his life was prolonged, an age. He was too honourable to leave the least doubt on the source of his information, lest the Baron might be supposed to have made a confidence to him. He at once declared that he was in the Orangery, in the dark, unknown to her, and, surprised by their coming in, had been an involuntary witness of the declaration and endearments which preceded the Baron's journey to Lyons. Of course he was lavish in his excuses for having alluded to the subject, and as lavish in his solemn vows never again to let the most remote allusion to it cross his lips. All was vain; she refused all comfort; she vowed she cared not whom he apprised of it, so he never dared to insult her by coming near the subject; and she then broke away to her own apartment, where, unable to read, or write, or speak, or think, she flung herself upon the sofa, in an agony of mortified pride and vexatious fear combined, the mixture which most entirely unhinges the mind, as that of some mineral poisons, mercury and antimony for instance, has

a like power of suddenly decomposing the bodily frame in some habits.

It did not tend much to soothe her in this state of distress, that there were manifest indications of the party at length breaking up at the Château. Various accidents had led to its continuance being prolonged : but notwithstanding the near relationship of the parties, the Count could not remain much longer, and even if he did, the Baron, who had been repeatedly at the end of all the excuses he could devise for lingering on in the society he must loved, must now leave the south, and point his steps towards his own country. The prospect before her, therefore, was anything rather than cheerful. She was much in the power of one whom she neither respected nor esteemed, and who on his restoration to his proper orbit, the Parisian circles, might, for anything she could tell, make her weakness the topic of his mirth in general society, or of his confidential disclosures to those he was addressing. She was still more in the power of another, but him she passionately loved : and from him she must in all probability soon be separated, only to meet late in the ensuing season, when she might find him absorbed in politics, or changed in his feelings

towards her. The aspect of public affairs gave her comparatively little uneasiness : she was not apt to be alarmed ; very prone to indulge in sanguine views of all but her own personal concerns. However, a long and serious illness into which the Marchioness de Bagnolles fell about this time, and which would have made it cruel to leave the Marquess, seemed to give her a respite, and she begged, she intreated, she implored the Baron to defer his journey. Towards him she no longer could show any of her accustomed pride, as if she were unable to spare any of it from Ernest, against whom its concentrated vehemence was all levelled. For the more she stood in dread of his disclosures, and the more she felt herself in his power, the more proudly did she behave towards him, the more scornfully did she on every occasion treat him. She seemed to defy him, and acted as if she would obliterate the evidence of his senses and his memory by carrying herself like one entirely innocent, and even unjustly slandered. She behaved as if she had forgotten everything herself, and as if she could by ill-treatment erase everything from his recollection, having by some preternatural effort blotted it from her own. Ernest, on his part, heartily sorry for

having been betrayed into a disclosure which he felt ought never to have escaped his lips, bore all her demeanour with the greatest calmness, and even good humour ; nor did this administer much to her relief ; she rather was vexed to see his imperturbable temper, so unlike her own, and drew from it a conclusion that he would take his revenge when she should not be present to protect herself.

Meanwhile events went on thickening around them. The announcement was made that the King had at length resolved upon calling the States General, and the third Assembly of the Notables was to occupy itself with arranging the plan of their election and the order of their proceedings. M. La Croasse had now left the Château, unable to prolong his visit like the other guests, but of two gentlemen from Nismes, who were frequent visitors there, one, the Chief Judge of the Languedoc Tribunal, fully supplied his place ; for his principles were as much on the extreme of royalism, and his fears of change were, from his enlarged views, if possible, more disquieting. Though a man of a firm mind, M. de Chapeley could descry no bright spot in the whole of the overclouded and unsettled horizon now surrounding them. The other, M. Catteau, also a lawyer, but

only a private practitioner, and though clever and not ill-informed, yet without success in his profession, gave his whole mind to politics, and had rushed into the most violent extreme of what were now termed “constitutional opinions.” His respect for the judge did not in any way mitigate the extravagance of the language he held in his presence; he treated his alarms as delusions arising from his station, and avowed himself devoted to the cause of the people. When M. de Chapeley mildly reminded him of the risk which others ran who had property, rank, station, or professional distinction, and consequent gains, to lose, while he at least was playing a game entirely safe, and in which the loss of all other classes might make him, and those like him, winners, he laughed scornfully as he said,—“They who like me have what is insolently called nothing to lose, have taken no bribe from fortune, through any of the channels whereby she corrupts. We are neither gained over to the abuses of the existing system by sharing in them at Court, or by holding offices in the law, or by enjoying professional incomes, or by possessing wealth in any shape—for in any shape wealth is a bribe, being enjoyed in security only while public affairs remain steadily quiet.”—“Has

it never struck you, my dear Catteau," said the Marquess, "that as all true patriots must be anxious for whatever best promotes the interest of their country at large, if your principle were acted upon, and only those courses pursued which benefited or which pleased men without any stake in the country, the fearful consequence must be the sacrifice of the whole to the advantage or the gratification of a very trifling part?" "Yes, truly," said the lawyer, "a very trifling part, if we are to be regarded as all, without reckoning those we represent. But be pleased to consider that we speak the sentiments and maintain the cause of the million. We have little ourselves, but those we represent have less; and trust me that in the end they must prevail."

"Catteau," said the Judge, "I know your doctrine, and any more dangerous never was broached or was preached. Your rule is always to go to the extreme of any opinion, and to spurn all qualification, all mitigation of it, as a compromise with the adversary, and an abandonment of principle. It was in this way you cut out Jussieu as a leader of faction, an able and learned man, but who had some reason, some moderation in his

opinions, while you went to the uttermost extent on all questions."

"And if I found any one go further than I now go," said Catteau, "I should at once shoot a-head of him, provided it was in the right direction."

"Meaning thereby," said the Judge, "the high popular direction—the direction taken by those who inculcate upon the public the belief of their own unity, their own omnipotence, their own omniscience."

"I don't much quarrel," he replied, "with your description; my fixed opinion being that such is the course which the better part of the State must now take. The States General are convoked for next May. What care I for the instrument which commissions the Notables, a set of crown nominees, nobles, magistrates, and the like, to regulate their proceedings? When they shall meet will they regard the opinions of the packed and despicable Notables?" "However," the Judge said, "the mode of electing them will, meantime, be fixed, and that must influence the constitution of the body." "Not in the least," said Catteau. "Enough for me that a thousand or twelve hundred men are to be delegated, and two from the

Commons, or third estate, for every one from the privileged orders. I wonder how in the present temper of men's minds any such assembly can be chosen that will not run headlong towards the fundamental change, what I call the real reformation, of our whole system." "I fear," said M. Chapeley, with a deep sigh, "I fear me your prediction is too likely to be realized; I grieve to think of the stormy times that await us. One comfort I have is that I shall not long remain to see and to suffer." "And I, sir," said the fiery advocate of the people, his only client, "I glory in the hope that we are touching upon the age of great events; when men of genuine principle will rise to the surface; and your moderates, and compromising time-servers, with their worldly ambition, your Jussieus, in a word, will be precipitated to the bottom, and no more heard of than the other dregs to which they naturally belong in the mass."

The conversation was interrupted by a message suddenly brought to the Chevalier, who was sitting musing on the talk he heard, but taking no part in it. The purport was alarming to him, and he quitted the room. The Marquess ran after him, and

returned with the intelligence that Ernest Deverell had had a severe fall ; that he lay senseless at a neighbouring inn, whither his father was gone ; and that he had never spoken since the accident. The Countess hastily left the room, and sent for Chatillon. “ I do desire that you will instantly follow the Chevalier, and ascertain all the particulars of this accident.”—“ Why, really, my love,” said he, “ I hardly think it becoming in me to show so much more anxiety than his own nearest relations, all of whom, doubtless, feel alarmed and interested in his fate, but ”—“ Fate,” said she, her eyes glittering with extraordinary lustre—“ Fate ! you speak of fate ! Is there a—chance ”—she added, as if hesitating for a word and then taking the wrong one—“ I mean a fear—is there a fear for the young man’s life ? ” “ Why, I apprehend there is ”—her husband answered. “ Then may not I feel anxious, interested—alarmed, I mean—as well as any one else ?—I suppose there’s no harm in that.” There was a something that powerfully struck the Count, in this extreme eagerness, so unlike her who never seemed to care for one man more than another, unless in so far as he contributed to her amusement or to her political information.

The idea hastily passed through his mind, that, had his nature been jealous, here seemed an occasion for feeling that vexation. This made his refusal any longer look like having such a feeling, and as no man can bear to be suspected of jealousy until the eve of its final explosion, he at once said he would go, as she desired it.—He went, leaving her on the very rack of anxious and eager expectation that every step she heard approach her door would bring the most interesting intelligence. Foot after foot came, the bearer of persons wholly ignorant, most of them wholly careless, of the young man's condition. At length, impatient beyond endurance at the delay, she went to the library, then to the salon, then to the billiard-room ; but all were gone to their apartments before dinner, and she could find no one possessed of the least information upon that which so deeply interested her. She returned to her own room. Soon after Chatillon came, with a gay countenance and said, “Thank God !”—“Thank God, for what, then?”—she exclaimed, seizing hold of his wrist and looking as through him with her fierce eye. “For what are we to thank God ?”—she repeated. “Why, that he is quite safe, my dear.”—“Quite safe !”—she roared, casting his hand

from her with a swing that made it vibrate round his body. "Oh, yes !" she added, resuming her self possession ; " Oh, yes ! He is safe,—thank—God ! —But I desire to know what kept you so long while I was waiting in anxious impatience ? Did you walk on purpose to lose so much time ? Was that your kind, good-natured, obliging plan ?"—He now knew that something, he could not tell what, had put her in a bad humour ; and that any one thing would then be made the ground of picking a quarrel, and the theme of the quarrelsome discourse. Indeed, she began upon another topic and expressed herself with extreme anger about a book she had got from him, attacking some things in it as if he had been the author rather than the owner of the work. So, muttering between his teeth somewhat like " Thank God, I have got a hat,"—he quietly withdrew to take a walk alone, when she recommended him to keep his sneers for those whom they better suited, and to save his piety for a fitter occasion, as his hat could be of little use to him while every one was dressing for dinner.

She now, by an effort, regained her outward composure ; but nothing that passed that evening had the least power to engage her attention, unless

when some account came from the Chevalier at the inn, or when the particulars of the accident were talked of. Her spirits were now exhausted by the two vicissitudes, each of them sudden, which her mind had in a short period of time undergone. In one minute she had heard of Ernest being seriously, she had easily believed fatally, hurt ; in another mind, within only an hour from that intelligence, she had heard and believed, as certainly though less readily, that the injury proved immaterial. She was now in the self-same predicament as three hours before. But she had undergone alarm and anxiety and suspense quite sufficient to shake her nerves and exhaust her spirits, and she took no interest and bore no part in the general conversation, which again rolled upon the critical state, as all allowed it to be, of the country.

“What is your opinion, M. de Chapeley,” said the Baron, “of the spirit generally prevailing among the people? Will they show that they feel much interest in the passing events, or will the movement now spreading be confined to a few places, such as Grenoble and Rennes, where the Parliaments have taken an active part in the controversy?”

The President said, "Always admitting how difficult a problem it is to determine what the people will do, or even what opinions actually prevail among them, because we never can have the requisite data for solving it, my notion is, that as a mass they do not take any great interest in the present disputes. The state of the finances, the cause of all the mischief, little affects, unless it be the Gabelle, those who have no property; the feudal exactions form no part of the grievances sought to be remedied, and if they did they only affect the country people, and chiefly the small proprietors; whereas when you speak of the people, in connexion with a revolutionary movement, you mean of course the masses congregated in large towns, and not the individuals scattered over farms or only inhabiting small villages. The effects of the great grievance of all, the *lettres de cachet*, absolutely pass over their heads, and strike only the upper ranks. The quarrels of the Parliaments they care nothing whatever about; for the lawyers never had any popular following among us. Indeed, the parliamentary places are property, being bought, and sold, and inherited; and their holders, belonging to the aristocracy, are regarded like other proprietors."

“ But, M. le Chef Juge,” said the Baron, “ you will recollect that both at Grenoble and Toulouse, the people took part with the Parliament, and even broke out into excesses. Count Perigord, our governor of Languedoc, was forced to fly, and the two regiments to be withdrawn, while the multitude actually took up the paving-stones as if to prepare for a siege.”

“ I am far from affirming,” said the Judge, “ that such gross indiscretion as violently banishing these two Parliaments for acting in the discharge of their public duty, how erroneously soever that of Grenoble may have proceeded on the subject of *lettres de cachet*, will produce no sympathy among those who, generally speaking, care nothing for those judicial and administrative bodies; and, indeed, I excepted the towns where Parliaments are, when I expressed my belief that the present ferment is not universal. I must add, that if such vigorous measures were to be taken in these places, common prudence dictated the necessity of being well prepared to support them.”

“ Then,” said the Baron, “ don’t you imagine that the issuing of this decree calling the States will produce some general excitement? Is it not natural

to expect that the exercise of the right of electing deputies will soon inoculate the people with a political feeling, should they have none at present?"

"Why, hardly," said M. de Chapeley; "I hardly expect that many of the people will attend the elections. The elective office is a function they never have been used to perform; nor is the exercise of it, the mere choice of a delegate whose functions are also very obscurely conceived by them, likely to interest them greatly."

"In England, however," said M. Catteau, "the people take the liveliest interest in their elections. The sovereignty of the people there assumes a truly imposing attitude, and makes both peers and princes tremble."

"Why, Catteau," said the Judge, "you are forgetting two material things; the functions of the deputies are, in England, familiar to the electors, because they are accustomed for ages to see them exercised in the legislation, and even the government of the country; and their own functions, as electors, have become equally well known to them, from the assiduous court paid, and I fear occasionally from the undue means taken to obtain, even corruptly obtain, their suffrages."

“ In France,” said Catteau, “ I glory to think such means must fail. The divine attributes of the people in their sovereign capacity never can be brought to so low a level by corruption any more than by intimidation. Witness the glorious conduct of Toulouse, where the military threatened in vain, and were forced to retreat.”

“ Catteau,” said the Judge, “ I have no more reliance upon the political purity than I have upon the political courage of uneducated men, or upon their political wisdom or their virtue when acting in large masses. Nor is there one of them whose judgment on any matter, be he acquainted or not with the subject, I would not infinitely rather trust, taking it from him individually, than I would the opinion of the mass to which he belongs, of which he forms a unit among thousands, and which is sure to act by impulse, consulting always its feelings, and never its reason. Nay, I go farther—there is such a contagious effect in violence, when once you assemble your mob, that the same man who individually would be safe to follow, or to command, or to advise with, shall become as heedless of consequences, and as utterly useless for all purposes, as if he were no longer the same individual, nor indeed is he.”

“For all purposes, thank God,” said the Advocate, “except one, and for that, thank God also, their perfect use consists in their numbers.”—
“And pray what may that one excepted function be, the bare thought of which makes your countenance radiant, and your breath devoutly thankful?”
“For the purpose of action!” said Catteau, with a sinister look and a grin of ferocious delight.

“Yes, yes,” said the calm and clear-seeing Judge. “Yes, for action no doubt, and for something else, which I make no manner of question you also have in your eye,—for submission, for obedience to the will of its leaders, no doubt a mob, because of the very defects I am alluding to, is naturally both a blind instrument and a sharp tool; both prone to follow whatever impulsion is given by the leader’s hand, and powerful to cut its way through all that may resist. But when you speak with such triumph of the force which multitudes acquire from their power as well as their mass, from the contagious feelings that influence them as well as from the numbers they consist of, don’t forget the other quality of your ally—your tool, let me again call it. If that tool be blind and be sharp, it is also apt to prove slippery; nay, apt to have its edge turned,

and turned the more easily the finer it is, when it suddenly encounters any obstacle." "Again," said Catteau, "I cite the courage displayed at Toulouse."—"And again," said the Judge, "I will express my sad impression of the cruel injustice which closed the events of that day; when the most beloved of all the nobles in this country, I might say in France itself, he who the week before had been the darling of all ranks, even of the populace itself, was forced to fly from the seat of his government, having remained there twenty-four hours at the imminent peril of his life. Let me add that when you praise the courage of the undisciplined multitude, you also are forgetful of its fleeting nature, its capricious character. One hour they will under the influence of strong excitement face a battery, another they will fly from a couple of sentinels. Then I must observe that, whether congregated or acting separately, the unembodied people are the natural prey of a similar kind of fear. They are apt, exceedingly, incurably apt to credit all rumours, to be influenced by all panics; and, even where no such sudden influence is applied to their minds, they are exceedingly prone to bend and crouch before any authority, be it a man, a party, or a mob, parcel of

their own body, in whom power is for the moment vested, and by whom it is displayed."

"I have heard," said the Marquess, "that this was exhibited in a striking manner both at Toulouse and at Grenoble during the late riots. They tell me that, at Grenoble particularly, a few hundred miscreants kept the whole people of the town in awe during their reckless, pillaging proceedings; while at Toulouse multitudes were compelled to join the insurgents, and still greater numbers to look on as passive spectators and acquiesce in what they most disapproved, because the mob, that is, a thousand or two led on by a hundred or two, had gotten possession of the place."

"Depend upon it, Catteau," said the Judge, "it thus is and ever will be with the mere multitude. You cannot rely on their steady purpose in desiring any objects, nor can you reckon on their firm resolution in executing any plan; and they are truly, like the dealers in magic, those who are familiar with evil spirits, oftentimes the victims of the terrors they inspire."

When M. de Chapeley left the Château, which he did after dinner, good-naturedly taking M. Catteau in his carriage, the Baron mentioned to his host

how much he had been struck with the learned judge's conversation, his profound sense, as well as happy expression, set off by the most winning good nature and delightful manners.

“He is indeed,” said the Marquess, “all you say and more. There have been few men more eminent at our bar ; nor would he discredit the most exalted station in the profession he adorns. His father was one of our most eminent artists, and the son has from college upwards been always the most distinguished of his contemporaries. At Montpellier he carried away the highest honours as a profound and elegant mathematician, his taste ever keeping pace with his solid, substantial acquirements. In manly vigour of mind, in a sagacity that never fails him, be it applied to great purposes or to smaller objects, in a happy power of throwing away the husk of any subject he has to master and reaching at once the kernel, he stands unequalled in the law. He was, as an advocate, skilful, dexterous, learned, ready, undaunted ; as a judge his calm impartiality, his universal courtesy, his unwearied patience, can only be exceeded by his unexampled clearness and conciseness of statement, the soundness of his views, and the cogency of his reasoning. But if in most

things he excels others, in one he seems to exceed himself. I would go any distance to enjoy again a treat I lately had the relish of, when he displayed to its utmost perfection, his great faculty of clear, connected, interesting narrative, without a single remark, or any attempt to apply his facts to his purpose—yet so completely effecting that purpose by painting to his auditory a lively picture of the whole case, that the most elaborate reasoning could not have more perfectly secured the adoption of his conclusions. They tell me that he, t'other day, equally astonished the court in which he presides, by a clear and vigorous statement of above twenty ordinances and edicts, giving the dates and the substance of each, without omitting even one figure, though without a single note to help his recollection. They say it was like a code of penal law (for penalties were the subject), from the edict of Moulins to the present time.” “And yet this extraordinary man,” said the Baron, “is turned of seventy! Was he ever in greater mental force when younger?”—“Not at all; it was impossible he should. Nay, his body is as robust, and his intellect as clear as ever, that is to say, as any man's of any age can be. He has an amiable, and handsome, and accom-

plished daughter, whom you saw here the other day."

"I am aware of that," the Baron said; "my niece describes her as a delightful person; she has made her acquaintance, and likes her exceedingly. She tells me that M. de Chapeley is, in private life, the most amiable of men, as indeed, from all we see of him in society, one can easily believe. Pray, had he ever any political functions?" "You are aware," said the Marquess, "that in our constitution, which, for any thing I know, differs from your Netherland system, the lawyer rarely if ever exercises any administrative functions. But M. de Chapeley, beside having been Procureur du Roi for some years, was much consulted in difficult times by the Governors of Languedoc. His unshaken firmness proved, in all difficult emergencies, a match for the occasion, and bore its full proportion to his unfailing sagacity and his fertility of resource. He often, indeed for many years generally, found himself opposed to his old and valued friend, M. de Balaye, now Second Judge in his court; and who had been a more eloquent and popular, though no man could be a more learned or skilful advocate, while both were at the bar. They resembled one another in their love of scientific

pursuits, and in their agreeable manners, though the temper of our friend was always far milder than that of his fellow lawyer, but in their views of public affairs they often differed, and sometimes the one and sometimes the other prevailed. Of late, their long private friendship has never suffered even a moment's interruption from political differences, (indeed, it never did for above a moment at a time), both being now indissolubly knit together by their common apprehension of such leaders as the Catteau faction would prove; and thus their harmony is unbroken. Balaye is several years younger than the First President, and delights in making his heavy duties and important functions easy to him; and in private life they are, as indeed, they always have been, inseparable friends. There is nothing which these two humane and just judges have had more at heart than mitigating the sufferings of unfortunate persons who, without any fault of their own except poverty, being unable to pay their debts, are by the hard necessity of the judge's office consigned through his sentence, to the degradation, the suffering, and even the pollution of a prison. M. de Chapeley and M. de Balaye have given themselves unwearied pains to effect the release of this

unhappy class of people, furthering every plan of compromise with their creditors, and even introducing rules of practice into their courts which have the effect of preventing many arrests, and of liberating many already in prison. It is their fixed opinion, indeed, which on all occasions they declare, that imprisonment never should be for debt, but only for fraudulent practices or other misconduct, provided the debtor be willing honestly and fairly to give up all his property for distribution among his creditors. In their endeavours to bring about the adoption of this wise and just principle, these two friends and colleagues co-operate with indefatigable zeal, while Catteau consumes the day in wild and furious talk."

"I am thankful," said the Baron, "for your kindness in giving me this portrait of these two distinguished friends. I only wish poor Emmeline had heard what, from her intimacy with Mdlle. de Chapeley, would so much have interested her. Of the Catteau tribe you have said but little."

"Nearly about as much as they merit," the Marquess said. "Nothing can well be more despicable, in all respects, but one ; having no restraining connexion with the power of the country, they have no

principle, no fear of consequences, either here or hereafter ; but, excepting the facility which this gives them to lead on the mob forces, they have no kind of resources (*moyens*). Without solid learning, or any learning that deserves the name ; without any one valuable accomplishment ; with no talent save that basest of all faculties, the power to string sentences together which may tickle the ear of the multitude ; with no restraint from principle, more than any responsibility under which they act—they would willingly see all things flung into a state of hopeless anarchy, that they might gain in the confusion, they cannot clearly see what ; but something and anything, how little soever, would to them be a material gain, because it has often been said that the greatest of all steps is the transition from nothing to something. I cannot help fearing that no small number of this pestilential class will find their way into the States General, where there may not be a Chapeley or a Balaye to control them.” “ No,” said the Baron, “ but there may be a Mirabeau to lead them on.” “ You agree, I perceive,” said the Marquess, “ in the high estimate which all men have formed of his capacity.” “ Yes,” the Baron replied, “ and also in their low estimate of his virtue. He is a man of the most brilliant

talents, and absolutely destitute of principle, which makes it singularly unfortunate that his talents should be exactly of the caste most adapted to shine in troublous times, and especially to gain the ascendant in popular assemblies. The first place, and almost without a competitor, is certainly reserved for him in the meeting of the States. When I reflect on the integrity of M. Necker, who is sure to be once more tried as minister of the Crown, and set against his Genevese pedantry and German manners, the wit, the worldly wisdom, and the eloquence of Mirabeau, hampered by no reserve or modesty, restrained by no regard for principle, I can hardly doubt which will carry the day ; and though he is not at all likely to join with the base vulgar of the Catteau tribe, he is very certain to give the popular party a leader little disposed, if he were able, to curb their unbridled licentiousness."

The party remained in the saloon later than usual, in order to see the Chevalier on his return from the inn, and learn the latest accounts of Ernest's accident and state. He did not arrive home till long after midnight, and they heard nothing from him till they all met next morning at breakfast. Emeline was now well again, and the Countess had

recovered her equanimity sufficiently to join the party, which now comprehended all but the Marchioness, still confined to her apartment.

The entrance of the good Chevalier, his morning face decked in smiles, and his expression of perfect readiness for his morning meal, at once proclaimed, without any detail of particulars, that his mind was at ease, and that he had left his son quite safe the night before. But all were anxious for the particulars. "How did you leave your patient?" said the Marquess. "Mons. Ernest, né Deverell," he answered, "is as well as it can be expected that a man should be, who was thrown from a carriage by the running away of two ill-broken colts, the property of his father."—"You were satisfied, I hope, with the medical man? M. Cirac is well spoken of by all who have anything to do with him."—"Why, brother of mine, look you, my experience in this department is limited; having never, God be thanked, had anything to do with that faculty; but, ignorant though I be of their craft, I will hold a wager with the best professor of Montpellier, that had my lad been left to Cirac's doctoring, our faces would have been some ell or twain longer to-day."—"Why so? I never heard his cleverness called in question."—

“Why, as thus : when his Serene Cleverness arrived, the lad was still senseless ; and, remembering my fox-hunting experience, I apprehended a concussion, and took for granted there would be instant bleeding. No such matter ; but all I could get from the doctor was that the patient was in a very alarming state, which I knew quite as well as himself, and I verily think could also as well have got him out of it. I therefore proposed bleeding at once. ‘Bleeding?’ said he, more drily than before. ‘Bleeding,’ said I more peremptorily than before. ‘Sir,’ said his Serene Dryness, ‘Sir, as you are not, I presume, his doctor, so you ’ll please to leave me alone in my proper functions.’ ‘But,’ said I, ‘as I am his father, I shall insist upon his being bled. Why, what would you do, seeing him as you do senseless?’ ‘I may perhaps order him a leech or two to his feet, and then a little cooling physic; then I should be guided by circumstances. My rule is to follow nature.’ ‘But, Doctor,’ I said, unable to constrain my impatience, when every moment was of the utmost importance, ‘if you wait to follow nature, I shall follow my son to the grave ; and, therefore, unless you let him blood stoutly and like a man, I shall send for my ally the barber in the village, in order

that you may not send for your ally the undertaker.' This, I fear, somewhat offended his Serene Ability, the doctor; he flounced out of the room; I could hardly say, in any correctness of speech, that my son's blood was upon his head, but I fired after him a hearty curse, sent for the barber, and had the lad well bled; and in half an hour he was in bed as comfortable as I ever saw him in my life. I left him at past midnight preparing to sleep, after taking a cooling draught, and singing *La belle Gabrielle*, while he expressed his satisfaction at having escaped by any means, even a broken head, the worse accident of Catteau's society, whom he particularly dislikes. Verily," added the Chevalier, "I do protest that these doctors be a generation which one may call ignorant."—"Of medicine you mean," said the Baron, drily; "of other things they seem to know as much as the rest of us."

When the party went, as usual, after breakfast, to sit on the benches under the porch, shaded from the sun, Emmeline fell into the Countess's company, and was expressing her confidence that this accident would prove nothing. "Nothing, indeed! Who told you that?" said Madame de Chatillon. "You heard the Chevalier's droll account," said

Emmeline. "Rely on it, unless all had been safe he would not have been merry on the subject."—"Then, I presume, you consider him as a high medical authority. I never heard a less promising case—but, perhaps, I know nothing of medicine any more than the Chevalier, and your judgment may be better."—"Dear Countess, I am the last person in the world to trust it—especially in a case of surgery; but I only go by the fact of the patient having come entirely round, and recovered his understanding and his spirits."—"Then does your medical skill approve the Chevalier's practice, as opposed to the Doctor's?"—"I have little doubt his old fox-hunting experience may have led him to treat a rather common accident in the right way; but really I may be rather speaking after my wishes than my judgment."—"Then I will only say this, that a much more unpromising case I never heard of than a person stunned to be senseless, and having a concussion of the brain, being doctored by a person as ignorant of medicine and surgery as the animals that caused the accident, and as obstinate as any mule, of whom they may be the cousins-german."—"Then, dearest Countess, what are your fears? for you alarm me." "Why," said she, with

much eagerness, "it signifies little, I suppose, what I fear; but I am next to certain that the man is gone, though he may not die to-day or to-morrow; and that if he recovers, his mind will be gone for life, as never fails to happen after concussions like his, half-cured, or not cured at all."—"Then what is the poor young man to do?" cried Emmeline; "for his place in the King's Guards will be gone, and on that he mainly depends, I fear."—"To do? Why to vegetate for life, if life remains in him; at all events to be no longer a rational being, but one whose faculties are gone—so that, though he may appear pretty well at times, his mind will always be wandering, his fancy at work, and his tongue be moved ever after by a diseased imagination." She rose at this, evidently a good deal excited, if not agitated, and Emmeline joined her uncle in the library.

"What can it possibly be, dearest Zio," she said, "that makes the Countess so irritable, not to say cross besides? When I but expressed my notion that M. Deverell was out of danger, which I really thought seemed usually admitted, she got quite angry, chid me for having an opinion at all, and pronounced with decision, but with impatience of any contradiction, that in all likelihood he could not recover." "I

protest, my love," said he, "I cannot conceive why she should be so much excited by the subject ; she never seemed to care a straw about Ernest, though he made violent love to her for some time."—"Besides, said Emmeline, "if she had cared for him, which plainly she does not, why should she be so anxious to prove him worse than he is ? People generally, the more they take an interest in any one, are the more ready to believe good news of them."—"But, darling child," he rejoined, "does Madame de Châtillon really think he cannot recover ?"—"Why, she seemed to take hold immediately of that idea ; but she then said if he did recover, he never could get back his mind, but would always wander, and never could be trusted."

There was something in this report of his friend's opinion, which set the Baron a musing for a length of time. Aware of her designing, scheming nature, which all his ardent passion for her could not blind him to ; knowing she never had any feeling, formed any opinion, or conceived any wish without a meaning or a plan—he thought there must needs be something at the bottom of this extreme interest taken in Ernest's recovery, or rather in his death ; and the alternative of his only getting well to be a person

no longer in his right mind—a person no one could trust—seemed to him a very suspicious circumstance. Now, though it be true, as the Baron knew, that the Countess was a deep, and much reflecting schemer, never doing, seldom saying, anything for nothing, it was equally true, as the Countess did not know, that the Baron was as designing, as contriving, as deeply calculating a person as herself, and a great deal more skilful in his calculations, because he had the steadiness to pursue them, which in men makes up for the want of a suspicious fancy, the great engine of a woman's cunning. Therefore he was on the alert and on the watch; nor did many days pass in the unreserved intercourse which the two friends daily had with each other, before he had ascertained two points without the possibility of doubt; the one was that the Countess hated Ernest with a bitterness of hatred which must have some good and sufficient cause—the other that there was nothing she so earnestly desired as to see him out of the way; in plain terms, that his death would be a sensible gratification to her. A third inference he had not quite so certainly arrived at, but it was in perfect harmony with the other two, and he reserved it for further consideration with a

kind of growing anxiety. It seemed to him as if she must somehow or other be in Ernest's power,—else why wish his death? Possibly, also, she was afraid of his tongue—else why perhaps believe, and at all events propagate the belief, that his mind could no longer be trusted? One subject here was wrapped in deep mystery. This young man, whom she most certainly disliked and despised, and towards whom she had always entertained even more dislike than she of late did, in what way could he possibly have the least power over her, or any means of injuring her, all he could have to tell being her rebuffs and slights of himself—perhaps to a much greater degree than he had ever experienced from any other woman? This was a mystery which the Baron left time to unravel; he was only quite at ease in his own mind upon the subject, secure of the Countess's love, and far too proud to dread a rival.

That she appeared to him in an unamiable light, through this affair, is certain—but he was blinded by great passion. He had begun to besiege her, knowing that the heart he deemed so well worth winning was not the most amiable, nor indeed in some respects the most single in the world. Finding it to be somewhat harder than he had supposed did not awaken

him from his trance of love. He knew that to himself it had been thoroughly softened; and he either cared not, or endeavoured not to reflect, how exceedingly it was hardened towards others, possibly all the more since it had melted to him.

But Emmeline did not see with the same passion-blinded eyes as her uncle; and she could not easily avoid making somewhat harsher remarks than it was her habit ever to indulge in. There was something extremely unpleasant in the irritation which Madame de Chatillon had shown, and the want of feeling seemed manifest to a degree which Emmeline could hardly have believed possible, especially in a woman. As she never kept anything from her uncle that passed in her mind, she resumed the conversation soon after as they walked in the garden. "How," she asked, "can a person of so much mind, so lively a spirit, and so full of intelligence, have so little of the warmth which women's hearts are generally subject to, even beyond that of men?" "I cannot think," said the Baron, "that our fair friend's heart can be cold, with her warmth of temper, of which you occasionally complain. These two things generally don't go together." "Why yes, Zio," said Emmeline, "I have sometimes thought that all the

warmth in our friend's composition is drawn away from her feelings by her temper." "I hear it said," observed the Baron, "that her passions are cold." "It may be so," Emmeline answered, "if by passions you mean a disposition to fall in love, which I believe no one ever ascribed to the Countess. But a hot temper may I fancy accompany a cold heart. From all I see of hers, I would not take a present of it, were it accompanied by all her beauty and all her wit." "My dear, dear child," said the Baron, delighted with her uniformly right feeling and virtuous principles, even where they led to a condemnation of his enchantress—"all your sentiments, whether of the head or the heart, are ever right. Whom you judge, they are sure to have justice; and that justice ever to be tempered with mercy."

As he meditated on the subject of this conversation, he was again forcibly struck with the new light in which the Countess seemed to have shown herself on the present occasion. The thought unavoidably forced admittance to his inward judgment, through all his devoted fondness, that she was indeed made of other materials than composed the singularly attractive character of his beloved niece. Nay, he was compelled once or twice to ask himself the appalling

question,—“Has she not desired the death of a fellow-creature, for some reason unknown, but merely on account of herself, her own interest, or her own fears? If so, has she not committed a murder in her heart?”—But such an idea, finding no harbour in his mind, no sooner presented itself than it was forcibly rejected; and by an effort, not hard to make, he flew for relief and for protection against such an intrusion to the mystery that veiled the whole of her conduct, clouding over with obscurity and uncertainty that which wore a very forbidding and sinister aspect.

CHAPTER II.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

A SEVERE illness, the consequence of confinement, to which his late life in the open air had not accustomed him, seized the Solitary, and prevented the Count from visiting him, except to inquire after his health. At the end of some weeks he was nearly recovered, and the old and confidential housekeeper of the Marchioness, who had alone been intrusted with the secret of his asylum in the Château, and with the care of his apartment as well as the supply of his table, said she thought a longer visit of Chatillon might prove good for the spirits of the invalid. He accordingly went, and found Albert so far recovered that, after two visits of half an hour each, he was able at the third interview to continue his narrative.

“I have been revolving much in my mind,” he said, “since my illness began, and especially during

my recovery, the extraordinary history of my past life, and the cause I have to mingle with much blame of myself inexpressible thankfulness for the goodness of God towards me. I have also reflected on the length to which this account has extended, and the unhappy aspect of almost every portion of it. I feel disposed to close it, and relieve you from an endless demand on your patience, the rather that, although I have hitherto been able to give you some useful information, and set before your mind several important matters of opinion, in what remains there is little of the same interest to be brought forward. You must, however, be informed of the losses that befel me, the hazards I encountered, and the accidents that led to my seeking here a refuge from the tempest to which my life has been exposed, until it shall blow over.

“I left off before my illness at the island of Cuba, where I passed several weeks, not devoid of interest, but made very painful by the constant spectacle of slave-vessels arriving from Africa, laden with their dreadful freight of human wretchedness and human guilt. I felt little inclination to prolong my stay in the West Indies, or even in the slave-countries of the continent; and I was on the point of setting out for

Port-au-Prince, in order to embark for the Northern States, when the innkeeper with whom I lodged told me that a gentleman who knew me had arrived from St. Domingo, and brought me a letter which had come there from New York. I eagerly sought him out at the inn where he was said to have put up, and I received from him the letter. My heart beat high with hope and joy, not unmingled with anxiety, as all our feelings are when far away from those we love. It was a year since I had heard of Louise or my mother, and the direction of the letter was in M. Gardein's well known hand. I returned to my own inn and went to my bed-room, that I might open and read it. Alas! the first line went like a dagger to my heart. That dear mother whose image seems even now never absent from my mind, sleeping or waking, had been taken from me after a short illness, in which her constant conversation was of the children she had lost. Her idea of my two brothers, long as they had been separated from their father's house, and surely as she had ever believed they must have perished long years back, had, as she approached her own end, been awakened, and her tender feelings revived concerning them. Ever to see them more she had long ceased to hope; but

still she felt that now she was about to leave the world without even knowing their fate ; while of me and my checkered story she knew more, and most of what she knew could shed little comfort round her dying bed. Her latter end, however, was peace—and peace such as the world cannot give. With all her fellow-creatures she was at perfect peace ; she who, in her long life, never had harmed a human being, and ever had done all the acts of kindness in her power to all. With heaven she was at peace—the peace flowing from the retrospect of so good a life, the peace which calms the soul in its struggles with mortality, and is a foretaste, almost a beginning, of its more perfect tranquillity in the realms of bliss. My father's desolation was described, and that, abandoning all hopes of ever seeing his other sons, he dwelt much upon my exile, and upon his anxious wish that he might once more see me before he departed. The pastor said nothing of Louise ; and in the melancholy state of mind into which the other intelligence had thrown me, I hardly was aware at first of the omission. He added, however, an intimation of great moment to me. There were signs, he said, not to be mistaken of great events and great changes, both in civil and in ecclesiastical matters.

The clergy had no longer the same support as formerly from the civil authorities ; the government itself was not equally strong ; the priests, at all events, whether as powerful or not, were no longer as arrogant ; they durst not venture upon holding the same high tone, or attempting the same harsh things ; while most of the authorities were declared supporters of a mild and tolerant policy. The good pastor said that in all probability things would soon assume an aspect which might make my return to Languedoc safe ; and he strongly recommended me to come near the spot, so that I might be prepared to rejoin my family once more, if events took, or rather went on taking, a propitious turn.

“This letter determined my course, and, truth to say, if I could hope for a tolerable chance of safety in returning to Europe, I was nothing loth to give up my scheme of again inhabiting the United States. Even the northern country, though far more tolerable than the south, little suited my taste ; and I could not help sighing over my long banishment, while I began to be visited with a gleam of hope that I might be destined once more to touch the soil of dear France. A vessel freighted with produce for Seville lay in the harbour of the Havanna ; I found

no difficulty in obtaining a passage, with the last remains of the little store I had scraped together in America; and I soon found myself sufficiently comfortable in her as a common passenger.

“It was impossible that I could feel otherwise than extremely melancholy during the whole of the voyage, after the irreparable loss I had sustained. My waking moments were constantly passed in reflecting on that dear person whom I should never more behold. Every particular of her quiet, unobtrusive, beneficent life came constantly to my memory. I used to think, in the silence of the night, that I again saw her sitting calm and composed alone, with her work or a book in her hand; and I could see her turn towards the door, as she was wont to do for many years after my brothers disappeared, in the hope of which she never could divest herself, that some tidings of them would at length reach her. All the little tender offices she used to perform towards me in my youth—her lessons, her advice, her religious warnings, above all, her kindly recommendation of charity and good-will, as these came into my mind used to bring tears in my eyes. Then I would upbraid myself with any little offence I might ever have given her—any harsh word, any impetuous

demeanour ; these used to sting me to the quick as I thought of the mildness of her rebukes, or her sorrowful look when I gave her any cause of complaint. For instance, it is a trifle, but it paints the state of my mind :—I remembered having once treated lightly the cheer which she presented on her frugal table, after I perhaps had been living for a few days with comrades, who indulged in more luxury than suited the reduced circumstances of our family. My harsh, thoughtless remark brought a tear into her mild, tender eye ; that one tear had at the time cost me many, but how many more did it make me shed on the passage home !—I have spent whole hours of the endless night in such gloomy reflections.

“ After a week or ten days spent in the vessel, I found that another American, or one passing for such, was likewise on board ; and it was natural enough that we should make acquaintance together. M. Cartigny soon expressed his opinion, that though I talked English pretty well, there must be some other language which I could speak better, and I at once confessed to him that it was not my mother tongue. Of his I entertained no manner of doubt, for he spoke like a native, at least no one but a

native could have detected anything foreign either in his language or his accent. He, however, acknowledged that he came from Geneva, though he had for many years been in England and for some time in America. I then, having formed a favourable opinion of him, let him know of what country I was, at which he very frankly expressed some regret as well as surprise; for, said he, "As I never before met with a Frenchman whom I could endure, and as you appear to be an estimable man, my prejudices are somewhat shocked." It was rather amusing to find a person so zealous in cherishing his prejudices, as much so as most people would be in getting rid of their's. Having, as you know, seen something of Geneva and its inhabitants, I frankly gave him my opinion of his countrymen, from which I did not find him disposed to dissent very widely; but he contended that for some time past they were no longer what they once had been, and that their character for honesty as well as for ability had been seriously impaired. Still he very greatly preferred them to the French, whom it was rather amusing to hear him strip of every one quality they most plume themselves upon, and which by common consent they are allowed to possess. That he should deny their

solidity, their serious and reflecting nature, their wisdom, even their sincerity, I could understand; though to limit their capacity for profound study seemed adventurous in the face of their achievements in the severer sciences to which he could only oppose his continual topic, a comparison with England, the object of all his admiration, and as the native country of Newton and Locke, exalted by his partiality into not merely a higher station than France, but invested with an exclusive claim to scientific merit and renown. But as to the lighter accomplishments, the ornamental parts of character, the graces of society, I did suppose here he might make some few admissions in favour of the French. No such thing; their manners were all grimace; their music was a constant effort and as constant a failure; their wit was flippancy, their humour non-existing, their poetry bombast; even their dancing he reckoned extravagant and far inferior to the Italian; and in short I found it in vain to look for a single confession except on cookery, and even there he dwelt with an unpleasant minuteness on the disgusting details of their kitchen. His indignation, however, reached its height when he spoke of the boasting habit, the self-complacency of our countrymen, and their contempt,

not certainly quiet but rather clamorous, of other nations. I ventured sometimes to place his Genevese countrymen by the side of my own in this particular, nor did he very much object to the juxtaposition, though he said the people of the 'perfect city,' as he jocosely called it, were, though quite well satisfied with themselves, yet rather more tranquil in the transports of their self-love.

"In alluding to the great names of France, some there were to whom of course he could not deny their share of renown; he only tried to show that either they had been bred, perhaps born abroad, or had foreign blood in their veins, or, which mightily comforted him when reduced to great straits, had been ill-used, abjured, and persecuted by their fellow-citizens. In some such fashion or other he got rid of Henry IV., Sully, and Coligny, the first the most amiable, and the other two the most virtuous statesmen of any age or country. But his invectives were fierce and unrelenting against Charlemagne, in so much that I once rallied him on it as if he spoke from personal pique against one who had been dead ten centuries. 'To be sure,' said he, 'and our family was ill-treated and even ruined by him and his vile corrupt emissaries, his Missi,

as he called them, whom he sent about the country, that is the world, to decide causes contrary to justice.' I found he derived exceeding great comfort, under the praises generally lavished on Charlemagne, from the notion of his having been thoroughly defeated in Spain. As for his private life he represented it as the most profligate ever known in ancient or modern times, and that his palace was one vast brothel, in which the Emperor's daughters were the leading characters. I need scarcely add that he in no wise gained me over to his opinion of this great man, one of the few monarchs who may be truly said to have lived before the age they flourished in. But I more easily came into his opinion of another character, his own countryman, at least by adoption, Calvin, whom, of all men after the Emperor of the West, he seemed most cordially to hate. He had raked together all the Romish slanders against his private character, affirming that he had searched the books of the Court, where he was charged with horrible offences, and durst not defend himself, and had found the statements to be founded on fact. However, his known and admitted enormities were quite sufficient to warrant any vituperation, and I went along with all he said

against the cruel, malignant, and selfish persecutor, who had first tried to have his adversary in controversy destroyed by a judicial proceeding abroad, he furnishing underhand the evidence required, and failing in that, had himself brought him to a trial almost unexampled for injustice, and caused him to be burnt alive. ‘The history of persecution presents no picture with harsher features,’ said M. Cartigny; ‘and yet such is the power of religious bigotry in blinding the eyes and searing the heart, that there are some millions of Christians, professing the religion of charity and peace, who glory in calling themselves by the name of this monster, as the most pure representative of the Christian faith.’ M. Cartigny himself, though a person of strong religious feelings, I found to belong to the sect of Unitarians sometimes called Socinians. He was a man of excellent abilities, great and various information, a most amiable disposition, and as strict a sense of honour as I ever found in any human being. We became extremely intimate, and we afterwards met in his own country, where he showed me much kindness and attention.

“For the rest, our voyage was prosperous; we arrived in six weeks at the Port, and I found the day after we landed that I could for a mere trifle obtain

a passage to Bordeaux in a vessel laden with fruit from the Levant. I passed easily for an American from the West Indies, and in less than a fortnight I was landed safe and unsuspected, with a white straw hat, long leather gaiters, and a calico jacket and trousers, in the noble though crowded harbour of that great and flourishing city.

“ There is a feeling peculiarly strong, and mingled of pleasure and pain, that rises in the mind upon returning to our own country, after a long absence. The Roman poet says, that every land is a brave man's native country, as every sea is a fish's. But I suppose the waters, like the land, differ, and that the mullet rejoices more in our blue Mediterranean, than among the sharks of the tropics. So I felt more at home among the wine-peasants on the beautiful borders of the Garonne, than among the slave-drovers of the West Indies. I never, it is true, had before been either in Bordeaux, or any part of Guienne or Gascony, and yet I felt that I was now at home. I once more heard the same language spoken to which I had all my life long been accustomed; I saw the same people; I resumed the same habit of living. In a word, it was that home, the idea of which is interwoven with all our strongest,

because our earliest recollections, and to which even in our most prolonged, and our most distant wanderings, we have often, unconscious of it ourselves, been accustomed to refer whatever we witnessed, and whatever we felt.

“ I found, however, on the banks of the Garonne, none of the relaxation of persecuting spirit which the pastor of Nismes had taught me to hope I should perceive upon my return to France ; and I hastened away from a city which appeared as much priest-ridden as any great trading-town could well be. Having often heard of the simple manners and honest character of the peasantry in the Limousin, I set out determined to find my way thither ; and M. Cartigny having lent me a small sum of money, with but moderate expectations of repayment, I contrived to travel so as to make it last me, till I should be able by day-labour or in some other way to support myself.

“ I went by a diligence which carried me to Limoges in an easy journey, the roads being very good, and the country not uninteresting. It was singular to find everywhere traditions of the dreadful times when all Guienne was in the power of England ; and one could hardly imagine we lived

in the same country upon not one inch of which now would a foreign flag ever be suffered to float without causing rivers of blood to flow. They show you at Chalus the spot where the English king, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, was wounded by an arrow, and died soon after; a prince whose valour has made him the theme of universal admiration, and the especial favourite of his countrymen, though it was literally the only good quality he possessed, and his ferocious nature resembled more that of a savage beast than a man; a religious enthusiast, too, who more than any other gave into the frenzy of the times, and exhausted his kingdom by senseless crusades, in which he, one morning, for the glory of the God of mercy, and in seeking to rescue the sepulchre of the Prince of Peace from its infidel possessors, ordered five thousand hostages to be massacred in cold blood. Limoges also has its recollections of the heroism of those times, the monuments of chivalry and its glories. The flower of all knights, the Black Prince, as he was called from the colour of his armour, whom all, even the philosophical historians, represent as a perfect character, getting angry with this town of Limoges because it chose to declare for its old and rightful

sovereign, the French king, massacred three thousand men, women, and children in one day. But he was a knight, and valued knightly rank and blood; therefore the knights were spared by this discriminating hero in his horrible butchery of the unoffending people. Could any one pass through such scenes, recalling to his mind such recollections, and not bless God that his lot is cast in other times? We have now the unutterable horrors of slavery and the yet worse slave-traffic; but we have long ceased to glory in them; we have begun to feel ashamed of them; soon we shall feel them to be unbearable; and another generation will not pass away before we wipe out so deep a stain on our character, and relieve our consciences from the load of such enormous guilt.

“When in scenes that recalled the vaunted age of chivalry at every step, it was impossible not to muse over the story of those times, and the extraordinary hold which their barbarous institutions took of all men’s minds, a hold weakened, indeed, but far from loosened, by the progress of a more genuine refinement in after ages. I well recollect the spirit of calm philosophy, in which my dear friend, Father Jerome, was wont to discuss the

subject when we dwelt upon this singular chapter of human history. Just towards all parties, and charitable even to the worst errors, when errors of the judgment they seemed to be and not of the heart, he used to admit the natural effect of brilliant exploits, their tendency to dazzle men by the noble qualities of heroism, of contempt for suffering and for death, which they displayed; and he seemed to doubt if we should ever be so far reclaimed by philosophy and religion, from this proneness to admire such qualities, as to give them only their due share of our esteem, and to see through the false glare which they shed over base and cruel actions. But he always held that the tendency of chivalrous institutions to exalt these qualities had been most pernicious. The false glare of mere warlike virtue had thus been fixed and perpetuated. The mind had become habituated to regard that virtue as occupying the first place. Men's feelings had been perverted, and their sense both of humanity and justice enfeebled. Not only had the merit of the peaceful virtues been undervalued in general estimation, and the renown of deeds truly beneficial to mankind obscured, but encouragement had been given to war, both among rulers and their

subjects. The influence of chivalry in reforming the manners of a barbarous age was not, he thought, to be wholly passed over. But it must, he said, be a very barbarous age which could be softened or improved by such proceedings as those of the Crusaders, and by the fantastic code of law, the law of honour, which their times produced; while one thing was, he affirmed, quite beyond all question, that whatever benefit chivalry may in a remote age have conferred on society, it had now ceased to be of any advantage at all in its remains which, in our times, were fruitful of nothing but inconvenience and mischief.

CHAPTER III.

FREE PEASANTRY.

“As I now perceived nearly approaching the very end of my resources, it was necessary that I should betake myself to some employment for support. I dreaded offering myself to any merchant or trader in Limoges, a town of considerable traffic from its central situation, both on the Bordeaux and Marseilles road. It was not even very safe for me to remain in a place where I might be exposed to the chance of meeting persons from the Contât and its neighbourhood. Recollecting with delight the conversations I used to have with the holy and learned friar on the singular eloquence of Massillon, I had a great desire to visit Clermont, his see, that I might gaze upon the pulpit he had preached from, and be under the roof whose vaults he had made resound with the thunder of his finished oratory. But the country was extremely mountainous, though roman-

tic, and after setting out on this pilgrimage, I changed my plan on reaching St. Germain, and took the road towards Bort. I there found myself in a perfectly rural situation, in valleys where the primitive manners of the people had been invaded by little refinement perhaps, but by no corruption, and among villages where so few were assembled, that all seemed as if in the country itself. I had never lost the peasant's dress in which Isidore and I made our first escape, after throwing aside the monastic habit, and I now had resumed it on quitting the diligence, and continuing my journey on foot. I found no difficulty in lodging myself with a peasant about three leagues from Bort, and never did I know more amiable people in any station of life.

“ The family consisted of the father and mother and four children, of whom the eldest could help his father, the girl assisted her mother, and the two younger ones were left to the care of their grandmother, one of the very kindest and gentlest creatures I have ever known in this world. She gave me the very idea of what poor Emilie Fonrose would have been had her life been spared, though of course much less elevated. No notion of self entered her mind from morning till night, and even in the night

she would get up if she heard any noise in the room where the children slept. Her anxiety was divided between them and their father, whose health was not robust, and who laboured above his strength, the rather that the climate is severe in the Limousin. The luxury of a fire at evening, one of the few we enjoyed, was made most grateful by the piercing cold which began in autumn and lasted till May. I was there in the three earlier of the cold months. The peasant's health made it desirable that he should have help, and this was the cause of my being engaged, at the very lowest wages, but with my keep of course. A maiden sister of the peasant was the only other member of this worthy family, which lived in a state of union that knew no interruption, and whose affection for one another really formed the chief pleasure of their lives. Education they had little beyond being able to read, and to write; but the evening's amusement was, that while the rest were working, one should read aloud some good book either of piety, or of history, or of travels, when any could be obtained; and the curé was unwearied in his kind attentions towards this and all the other families of his parish, frequently lending them from his small library such books as they could under-

stand and relish. The work of the women within doors was unwearied as that of the two men without, whom, indeed, occasionally they helped. Their spinning provided the clothes of all; for except on great occasions to purchase a little sugar and coffee, or spice, and now and then a bottle of brandy, to give a neighbour a little treat when he came to pass the evening, there was no intercourse between the cottage and the shops. The fare was wholesome, and cleanly cooked, but of the most homely kind. A pig was reared and its bacon furnished, the hams being sold, nearly the only relish to our vegetables which we ever tasted, unless when occasionally a pigeon or a partridge, unknown to the lord of the manor, might chance to be surprised by the son in his rambles or at his field-work. Brown bread, with coarse cheese, and occasionally lard to season it, milk, the butter being carried to market, dried apples and quinces on fast-days, on great occasions a cup of coffee—as a more ordinary luxury chestnuts, which were very fine, and which the good grandmother had much skill and took great pride in roasting, as she did in superintending the poultry, which were all reared for sale. These formed the humble fare of this most happy and most contented

family. I question if their ideas of indulgence ever extended beyond what they daily, morning and evening, devoutly thanked God for being permitted to enjoy. I am sure they envied no inmates of a palace their greater luxuries. The old woman would, indeed, on showing the children the little addition to their common meal which on a Sunday or saint's-day she could dispense, devoutly draw the moral how thankful they ought always to be for their comfortable lot, sheltered from the weather and indulging in dainty fare, while so many poor people were exposed to the wind and rain, without shed or clothes to cover them, and never knowing to-day where they were to find the morrow's meal.

“But it was not with the mind's food here as with the body's. Anything less coarse than the texture of their hearts have I never known; anything more refined than the sentiments their minds, as it were, lived upon, I never anywhere observed. The purest and most disinterested attachment to one another, the most anxious desire of each to consult the wishes of all, the most scrupulous regard of every one to strict decency and even the most delicate decorum, with the most unvaried sense of justice in all their dealings, and the purest spirit of

charity in all their expressions towards their neighbours, reigned throughout every branch of this primitive and happy household. The father would of an evening undertake to explain the difficulties that might occur in the books they read or listened to; and when he found himself unable to do so, he never disguised his ignorance, but hoping his son might one day know more, he promised to ask the curé, or the steward of the manor, when next he saw them. The grandmother, who had in her youth lived in a large town, Perigueux, would astonish and sometimes shock the little circle with accounts of what went on in such places. The sentiment then rose from them all, 'Oh, how thankful should we be to live far out of the way of such things!' The mother, too, was a mild and gentle person, but melancholy preyed upon her when she observed the declining health of her husband, and the tears would fill her eyes as she looked at her young children who might be left orphans and unprotected. 'Dearest Matilda,' her mother would say, 'trust in the Father of all mercies; he may yet shield us from that fatal blow; and, if he suffer it to fall on us, surely he that feeds the wild ravens will have compassion on these innocent little ones.'

“I am quite certain, and it is a reflection which has often come into my mind since, and on which I have never ceased to dwell with admiration—I am certain that in the most polished society, in the most refined age, there never were sentiments of more perfect purity, never was a more unbroken delicacy both of mind and speech, and manners altogether, than prevailed in the homely dwelling of this poor peasant, who supported his family with his own hands, and that of his sister and children, and whose fare was as frugal and indeed as little abundant as can suffice to maintain life. Nor was this household an exception. I found the other inhabitants of these valleys persons of a similar description, not all possessing as gentle and kindly dispositions, but all of them equally uncorrupted, and all presenting the same striking contrast between the hardness of their lives and the tenderness of their affections, the coarseness of their fare and the refinement of their sentiments.

“No day ever passed over our head in this happy valley, without forcibly recalling to my memory the conversation of dear Father Jerome, and sighing, oh how deeply sighing, that he was not here to find so ample a confirmation of his profound and benevolent

doctrines. Among the numberless amiable, and, in my sincere opinion, also wise, propensities of his nature, one was eminent over the rest—the love which he ever felt for poverty. It always seemed enough to gain his affection that any one was poor; a poor priest, a poor scholar, a poor householder, a young man struggling for advancement against adverse circumstances, a widow toiling to give her child education, a brother labouring to support a sister cast on his care—these were cases sure to touch his benevolent heart, to excite his sympathy, and obtain his help. But he had a speculative as well as a parental love for those in narrow circumstances, and he conceived that there was nothing at all to connect poverty with any squalid or coarse associations. On the contrary, he thought that the indulgences of wealth were more likely to prepare for the contagion of vice than the exhaustion of poverty; that luxury, and even comfort, dispensing with work, introducer of idleness, minister of the passions, is greatly more a corruptor than want. However, he would describe how easily, in his view of human nature, the lot of the peasant and his poverty might be united with not only the most kindly affections, but with great refinement of mind. The culture

derived from education he conceived to be quite compatible with a life of hard work, and if it was also a life of hard fare, the risk was lessened of corruption creeping in to taint its innocence, and debase its worth by the worst kind of coarseness.

“ But it was not merely from the exemplification of his benevolent views in the Limousin, that I was daily led to recall the good Father to my recollection. He used to cite as a proof of his doctrine the account which he had once received from Marmontel of his early life. That celebrated writer had then been for many years plunged into all the dissipation of a literary, a theatrical, and a fashionable life at Paris ; but on a visit to the South, when Father Jerome fell into his company, they had conversed upon his original station, and the education which he received, partly at Mauriac College, partly at that of Clermont, when destined for the Church. ‘ It was plain,’ said Father Jerome, ‘ that while reveling in the enjoyments of Paris society, he ever and anon sighed over the recollections of his youth ; and he described, with the most tender interest, his life while in his father’s cottage, surrounded only by his family, and with much difficulty supported at school. Marmontel was born at Bort, and the

valley in which I now lived was that where he had passed the years of his childhood in simplicity, and refinement of mind, but in circumstances as hard as can well be figured. I felt, therefore, as if he were now before me, showing the sad contrast which luxury and success had produced, and as if Father Jerome too stood by to resume his old lessons on the happiness and the refinement of humble fortunes.

“ I found in these valleys the same desire of education which had adorned them in the days of Marmontel. My peasant-master, finding I had been well educated, made me instruct his family; and while I remained, they all, himself included, made considerable progress in some of the common branches of learning. He would sometimes with a sigh say that his sons would perhaps live to be still better informed than they were now becoming, but that he should not be spared to see any material improvement in their condition; only he prayed with the prophet Agur that they might never know either the extremes of great poverty or great wealth.

“ The other peasantry of the neighbouring district were in pretty much the same circumstances with our family, and cultivated their own small properties;

but there were some farmers a little way off who had considerable holdings under the lord of the manor, and I occasionally went to see them on holidays, accompanied by the peasant's son, whom I taught in the evening. These farmers paid some of them as much as between two hundred and three hundred louis of rent, as they occupied their farms upon the old Metayer contract of receiving from the proprietor of the land seed, corn, and manure, and accounting to him for half the produce. They were of course in much more comfortable circumstances than small landowners. But I was struck and pleased with their simple and primitive mode of life. The master and his farm-servants, as they worked together in the field all day, he labouring full as much as any of his men, so they all dined together at the same table. The mistress sat at the head, and her husband by her side, and she carved the meat and distributed it among the men and women servants, who all sat around, nor was there the least difference in their fare. They talked all as if on a footing of the most perfect equality, and the harmless joke went round the table as if all had been children of the same house. The influence of the master over his men, and the mis-

ress over her maids, may easily be conceived. They were in truth as the father and mother of the whole ; nor did any parents feel in the least degree anxious or alarmed in entrusting their daughters to the care of such a pair.

“ These farmers, though much wealthier than the small landowners with whom I lived, were not at all better educated, nor had they more refined notions, or a more interesting character in general. They had none of the corruptions of luxury ; but their superior fortune did not elevate them above their poorer neighbours. I was present at a fête, a kind of merry-making, given in one of those farm-houses, on the christening of a first child. Fifty or more were assembled ; there was a dance, with a collation of fruits and dairy-dishes (*laitage*), and some glasses of hot wine and water after the dance, while the older men sate in an open space before the house, smoking their pipes. There was much gaiety, and no intemperance of any kind.

“ The comfort and even pleasure which I enjoyed during my stay in these peaceful and happy scenes, I never shall forget. However long I may be permitted to live, and with whatever classes of men I may become acquainted, the Limousin peasant has

left a picture of rural innocence and humble refinement that never can be effaced from my mind. It raises my estimate, not merely of the peasantry, but of the species, because it shows of what excellence they are capable, even under the pressure of the hardest lot. I never have since seen a man labour in the fields, or looked at a cottage in the country, without saying to myself ‘How can I tell that the same happy and virtuous minds may not inhabit that homely farm, the same tender-hearted families may not dwell under that humble roof, which I used to delight in associating with, both while labouring during the day or reposing at eventide in the valleys of the Limousin!’ If my heart leaps within me as often as I see a peasant or a peasant’s cot, as if I saw a brother or a home, it is from the remembrance of Bort, and the certain conviction that it only depends on the upper classes to have Bort every where around them.

“When I had been two months in the Limousin, the beloved pastor, whom I had contrived to apprise of my destination when I turned off from the Clermont road, wrote to an address I gave him at our town of Bort. This letter gave a melancholy account of my poor father’s drooping health since his

irreparable loss. It also inclosed a few lines from Louise, in which she expressed the most hearty and unaffected joy at my return.—‘ I will not be so proud or so prudish, ’ she said, ‘ as to conceal the extraordinary delight which this most happy intelligence has given me. Why should I ? Are you not my own dear love by every title and by all but every tie ? If this cruel separation must last for ever, surely our minds at least may be united. And when I know you are to read these lines, which my heart pours forth upon the paper, and to read them in less than a week, my spirit takes its flight as if it had already left my body, and were hovering over my dearest friend, to comfort, to support, and to protect him. But, after all, must there be raised between us an eternal barrier ? Are we never more to meet ? Is your crime, which I never seek to hide from your eyes or to justify in my own, never to be atoned for by years of sorrow, by days and nights of repentance, by the retributions which conscience exacts, by the sufferings which divine justice inflicts ? Can no means be devised of once more bringing us together ? Oh ! trust me with any project you can devise with that blessed design ! Fear not either my want of prudence in acting on your suggestion, or of obe-

dience in following your orders, or of courage in risking all that we may meet again. Think, ponder, devise, and write, oh ! write, even if it be to say you can strike out nothing to comfort and relieve us.'

"This enchanting letter threw me into a rapture which I do not think I had ever experienced before. There was so much heart, such a noble spirit, such a genuine love of me, and so firm a resolution, if possible, to be mine, that I regarded the matchless creature, perfect in mind as in person, endowed with understanding equal to the spirit which animated her, as something more than earthly; and as I read her charming letter a hundred times over, and laid me down smiling with joy at the recollection of each tender and each warm expression which it contained, she seemed to me something above the standard of mortal woman. I have often observed, both before and since, that there is nothing whatever which more wins the heart of man, nothing which more makes him beside himself in his passion for a mistress, than her frankness in avowing the mutual passion she is inspired with, and her bravery in encountering all hazards for its gratification. This courage too is very contagious. I felt ashamed of myself while any remains of terror clung round my

heart, and froze it, when it should have been on fire to run all risks. I went to sleep that night revolving plans of immediate adventure, schemes for rushing forwards and rescuing my Louise from her uncle, resolutions to bring her off from Avignon at all hazards; and the only feature of common prudence, or even of any reflection, in the picture that my inflamed imagination had conjured up, was the hope that, by Louise going on a visit to Nismes, she and I might more easily accomplish our escape to Switzerland. But in the morning all was gloomy; the prospect no longer smiled; the obstacles started up in every quarter; the enemy appeared in all directions. Yet the spirit of Louise's letter was enough to animate the rocks and the trees that re-echoed its sounds as I read it and repeated it without ceasing. How could I continue to tremble and to draw back? Some weeks passed in this struggle; all dangers were forgotten; I wrote a few lines which I entreated M. Gardein would convey to her. A fortnight after Christmas I set out towards a more congenial sky than that of the Limousin, and full of hope which laid all fears asleep. My plan still was our escape from France; and with this view I was to adopt a thick disguise, and meet Louise at Nismes, where she

could go, as she had gone before, to visit the good pastor.

“ The trifling sum which I had scraped together in the valley of Bort sufficed to defray the expenses of my journey, and I trusted to the assistance of the good pastor when I should reach his hospitable dwelling. But it was not without a real pang that I bade adieu to my kind and amiable host in the Limousin. The excellent qualities of the family had twined themselves round my heart, and had their dwelling but been beyond the frontiers of France, what more could I desire, than to seek shelter under its roof with Louise, and there pass in peace the rest of our days ? The declining health of the good peasant himself, whom I could scarcely hope ever more to see, added to the melancholy of my parting. But I was full of hope as of love, and all was forgotten except the prospect before me, as soon as the Rodez diligence drove away from Bort. We went by Mauriac and Aurillac to Rodez, and I then took another coach which went by Lodève to Montpellier, from whence I could easily find my way on foot to Nismes.

“ At Nismes I arrived, the whole journey having been passed in pleasing dreams, never to be realized,

but dreams which effectually chased all fears from me, and all but made me forget the heavy blow which had fallen upon our house since I left the country. I purposely contrived my arrival after dark, and I went at once to the pastor's house, with a heart now beginning to beat from anxiety, of which I had felt none on the way, all the future then being steeped in rose-colour. The face of the servant boy who opened the door, and whom I at once recognized, though he knew me not, at once showed my anxious foreboding of the last half hour not to have been groundless, though it was imaginary. The pastor was no more ; he had ceased to live and to love, to do justly and love mercy, a fortnight before, and after a short illness had an easy passage to his eternal rest and his rich reward. I made myself known, and was shown to the remains of that disconsolate family, who received me with the affection that he would have shown, but, alas ! could ill supply the place of my deceased guide and instructor, the father of my new birth, him who had set me free from the heaviest chains that ever were forged to fetter and to gall the human mind.

“ I was unable, for the first evening that I spent with this pious and amiable family, to enter upon

any inquiries as to the letter I had written before I set out. But next morning I was sorely disappointed by learning that the man of business who had looked after the pastor's letters and papers, had forwarded all those which he found intended for any one else, to their destination, and that mine, having arrived during his severe illness, had in all probability been likewise sent to Louise. Soon I found but too much reason to apprehend that it had fallen into other hands than hers; for the pastor's granddaughter, who was her friend, told me when I asked if she had been lately at Nismes, that they expected her to visit them in their affliction, but received a letter from her, intimating that all intercourse with Nismes was forbidden in consequence of a letter which had been received by her uncle. The visions which had been filling my mind for weeks seemed at once to vanish. I could not think of making this young girl the confidant of an attachment which was disapproved by Louise's family; and nothing was left for me but to make the desperate attempt of going to Avignon, sending some one of whose discretion and fidelity I must run all risks, to tell her I was waiting in a calèche outside the gate, and to take the chance of her at once making up her mind

to quit the place and escape the persecution which she was now enduring.

“The accounts I received of the Monastery added little to my comfort in this emergency; for they renewed my alarms for my own safety, as far as the engrossing passion which occupied me would bear any rival near the throne it had usurped. Father Ambrose had a year before succeeded to the abbacy; he had governed with rigour, though administering its affairs with such ability as might be expected from his well-known character; he had used every severity which the law would permit towards Protestants; and he had, ever since Louise’s conversion became known, directed his measures in an especial manner against her, harassing her by all the means in his power, and openly taking part with her uncle, whose confessor he had been, as well as her mother’s, before being raised to the head of the Convent. Her attachment to me was of course well known; it had been proclaimed by the exaggerating and perverting tongue of slander, upon my escape; it was more fully and truly made public by the rage of the disappointed uncle. It seemed needless to add what, however, I was also told, that the new abbot had by no means

abandoned all hope of discovering my retreat. He had failed in Switzerland, and in Germany, and ascertained that I had left that country; but he never ceased to expect my return, from all the hints which the close watch kept upon Louise and her mother by the hateful uncle enabled him to gather together. Louise never could disguise from her parent the hope of our meeting, with which she still flattered herself—and as this could only be by my return to Nismes, that place was now to be watched; and hence, even during the pastor's life, it had become extremely difficult for her to visit him. At his death she might have obtained leave to see his family, had not my letter unluckily reached the uncle, and through him stopped her going.

“The power of the clergy, I found, though it had been exceedingly curbed at Nismes, and, indeed, no longer extended to either a direct control over men's actions, of any considerable influence in society, was yet to all appearance as great as ever in the Contât. Therefore, though I might be more safe at Nismes, from all but the inquiries of the civil magistrate, to whom I was, unhappily, as answerable as ever; at Avignon I should be under the weight of the double yoke, and had to dread the

laws of the church, as well as those of the land. On revolving everything connected with our position, the best course seemed to be, that I should take up my abode near the town, in a cabaret, where I was unknown. At one time, I thought of going to my father's house; but it appeared that his declining health since my mother's death had severely impaired his understanding; and Mdlle. Gardein had heard from Louise that he was in a state that made it very doubtful if he should even recognise me. The plan of going to the cabaret, and taking my chance of forming some intimacy with one of its inmates, who might be made serviceable to my scheme, appeared, therefore, the preferable course. It was full of risk; but some risk must be run in every direction in which I could attempt to move. This, therefore, was the line I chose; and I lost no time in leaving Nismes for Avignon.

“In case my former disguise worn in Switzerland should have been reported by M. Crenelle, Louise's uncle, and in case any recollection of the peasant's brown dress should be preserved from the information of the farmer on the Rhone, who had been examined after giving shelter to Isidore and myself the morning after our escape, I was obliged

to get at Nismes a sailor's jacket and straw hat, which, with colouring my face by means of walnut juice, seemed to set all suspicion at defiance. I slept at a village on the way not far from Beaucaire, and on the following evening I got to a small inn, near Avignon, used chiefly by carriers and country people. Nothing particular occurred the first night; but next morning as I lay in bed, I heard two men who were sleeping in the same room, conversing about a murder committed some years ago, which roused my attention, though I did not let them see I was awake. From the circumstances, especially one of the men saying that the suspected person had been secured at Nismes, and had escaped, but was since known to be in Switzerland, I plainly perceived, of what and of whom they were speaking. Nothing could have relieved the agitation this threw me into, but the gross exaggerations which they gave of the unhappy catastrophe I had so much too great a hand in. One was that Father Lunel (as they called me) had run off with a nun; and another that he had attempted to kill her uncle, when he pursued them into Switzerland. When a murderer remains undiscovered it is singular how the remembrance of the crime is kept alive by the public im-

patience that blood should atone for blood. As soon as he has been found, and has paid the forfeit of his crime, the curiosity and interest subsides of itself. Till then every one seems to have a concern as well as the law in the course of justice being free and unobstructed; and doubtless every one has an interest in it; for nothing more effectually protects life than the belief that '*Murder ever will out.*' Father Jerome used to think that cruel punishments for this heinous crime were ill-judged, because they made men's minds more savage and ferocious, while the fear of punishment comes little into their recollection when under the domination of the fierce passions which in most cases prompt the perpetration of the offence. As that is the season not of calculation, but of feeling, he used to think that more depended on the general habit of mind previously formed, than upon the reasons suggested by observation, and only to be weighed at cooler moments. However, he admitted that a habit of fear might be formed by constantly seeing malefactors discovered, and if discovered severely punished; though his principle was that example deterred far fewer from the commission of crimes than was generally supposed. Among the safeguards to life,

he used to dwell much upon the respect for the dead, and even the horror of approaching or lightly dealing with their remains. He thought that men would much less shudder at spilling each other's blood, if they were accustomed to treat their remains with indignity, or even neglect: and he was wont to draw from this consideration an argument that the funeral ceremonies of different nations, even of barbarous tribes, were not without their use in a moral view, independent of their salutary tendency to promote serious reflection.

“ I walked out a little during the early part of the morning, and made afterwards some inquiry as to my distance from Arles, meaning, as I reported, to join my ship at Marseilles. But my object was to form some intimacy with a lad of eighteen, belonging to the house. All I could do, however, was to find that, without going into the town, I might hire a calèche, for a day, with a boy to drive me as far as Beaucaire, where the diligence would pass next morning. Seeing little chance of this boy being of any use to my plan, I was sitting near the door in the morning, when there passed a figure that at once fixed my eyes; it was Louise herself, walking towards the lime-trees which are on each side of the

Aix road. I knew not the young woman who was with her; but she had the air of a servant. Letting them pass, I followed till I could see they were in a part of the road where no one else was walking; I then came smartly up and passed them, moving on till I could turn so as to meet them. When I came near, I fixed my eyes on Louise, gave a smile, and instantly saw that I was recognized. I was right in my conjecture; it was her maid, whom she immediately left, and joined me at a few paces' distance. I had only a moment to bid her come to the last tree in the avenue at six o'clock, when I should have a calèche ready which would easily take us to Beaucaire, and the diligence to Aix would then enable us to get by Sisteron and Gap to Dauphiné, and so to Switzerland. The agitation of this meeting was calmed, or rather supplanted, in us both, by the agitation of the plan in which we were embarked. The noble girl made no objections; she resolved to follow my all but desperate fortunes; she agreed to meet me at six o'clock; and I lost no time in hiring a calèche which should take us to Beaucaire.

“As the hour approached I began to feel uneasy; but the calèche was at the place appointed, and in a quarter of an hour, which seemed a long night, I

saw Louise, attended by the same maid, coming towards me. In an instant we were in the carriage, she wrapt up in her cloak, and I keeping a look-out to see if we were followed. We had hardly time to express the joy we both felt at our separation being at length ended by a meeting, though assuredly not in very auspicious circumstances, when a diligence overtook us; but it was not the one which travels to Aix. We had therefore no chance of escape but by waiting all night at Beaucaire for the Aix coach, which was to pass early in the morning. At Beaucaire, then, we arrived; and we sate for an hour exchanging vows and congratulating ourselves upon this happy deliverance. Never except the day I received Louise's charming letter in the Limousin did I pass so delightful a time as between our arrival (the driver no longer being present to prevent our speaking), and Louise's retiring to rest. But our joy was darkened by a most untoward circumstance. The driver coming into the room where we sat, to be paid, bowed to Louise and saluted her by her name. How were we, then, to prevent our escape from being known all over Avignon next morning? I tried what I could to prevent his returning till late; but he would not listen to my proposals. We then

endeavoured to work upon his fears, and told him that the Commissary or Governor would punish him for having taken parties away without a passport. It was all in vain; it only made him the more desirous of returning; and he vowed to complain in the inn if he was detained a moment longer. He was therefore paid, and we immediately heard him drive off. I could not avoid feeling uneasy at this circumstance, but I endeavoured to make the least of it with Louise, whose great anxiety had exhausted her and made sleep absolutely necessary. I then resolved, in case of any unforeseen accident, to sit up all night in the room where we had supped, and also that I might have her called as soon as the time for the arrival of the diligence drew near.

“About six it was said to be nearly the hour; she was in a short time ready; indeed she had only laid herself down to sleep without undressing, in case of the coach arriving earlier than its usual time. The wheels we soon after heard, and with anxious hearts we waited to see if there was room. Happily we found two places and only two other persons, one a lady, the other a military-looking person of about twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, with a handsome countenance, though shaded with black mous-

tachios. This I saw by the light of the lantern as we were helped into the carriage by the inn-servant. We soon drove off, though at a pace very different from that which my impatience to be out of the Contât would have desired. Having slept none at Beaucaire, and it being still quite dark, I fell asleep, and may have continued in this state an hour when a great noise awoke me of voices roaring out, and, more frightful still, calling my own name. I was shocked again to hear the driver ordered to stop in the name of the Holy See's officers and authority, and to deliver up a party charged with murder and sacrilege. I instantly leapt out of the coach, and, snatching up a bludgeon which lay near the driver, threatened with immediate destruction any one who should dare to lay a hand on me. I perceived the officer of police was attended by another person, and from his figure and the few words I heard him speak, I could have little doubt it was Crenelle. Enraged beyond measure at his presence, I sprang upon him and secured him by the throat, when, my foot slipping in the clay, I fell, bringing him down upon me, and the policeman was in the act of securing me with a rope, when the officer from the diligence seizing

the bludgeon that I had let fall in the struggle, felled him to the ground with a blow, and extricated me. He implored me to fly and take the road to Nismes, as my life was gone if I hesitated. I felt as if in his voice I recognised a well-known sound, and the squeeze of his hand which immediately followed, at once showed me I was right ; it was the dear Isidore, who had been at Avignon in deep disguise, and was returning to Marseilles. I whispered that Louise was the woman under my care, but he plainly intimated that he could on no account be a party to any further violence against his uncle, which M. Crenelle was, as well as Louise's ; and implored me to take the only course left, that of allowing her to return with him, and myself consulting my safety in flight. With a heavy heart I communicated this to Louise ; Isidore gave him an intimation, but without discovering himself, that he took at his peril any proceeding against me. She accompanied him as we advised ; Isidore, again tenderly squeezing my hand, promised to let me know what befel him and where he was, but he was compelled to fly by the same conveyance, having no small fear lest he should himself be found out and followed. The diligence went forward, taking him on towards Aix ;

I got off the road upon an eminence where I could in the dim light barely see a person's figure upon the road; and as soon as I saw that Louise and her uncle were gone back towards Beaucaire, I took the road to Tarrascon, where I intended to wait till I could in the night go to Nismes. Fortunately I overtook a peasant who carried me in his car a good portion of the way; and, after lying concealed in the suburbs, I walked all the following night and reached the pastor's house before daylight.

“ You will perhaps wonder when I tell you that all my love for Louise, my agony at our separation, my alarm for my own safety, was nearly lost in one feeling which now pervaded my mind, the delight of finding my dear Isidore safe, and I hoped comfortable, if not happy, my astonishment at the strange chance which had brought us together, and my regret at having seen him but for a few moments. His generous devotion to me, his abandonment of all care for himself, to which I now for the second time owed my escape, dwelt on my memory as something of a romantic kind. If any superior power had given me the choice of being restored to his loved society or to my Louise herself, probably when the election was to be actually made I should not have

much hesitated ; but revolving it in my mind as I journeyed along towards Nismes, I hardly could have decided which to prefer. In all my vicissitudes I have known no truer friend—in all my wanderings I have had no experience of a more single heart in man, or a more loveable disposition.

“It was now necessary that I should at once disclose to the family the danger I was in. Before I arrived, reports had reached the place ; but in the course of the day these were confirmed ; and my attempt to carry off Louise, with an exaggerated account of the violence I had used to her uncle, made the whole subject of conversation at Nismes in every place of resort. The certainty of my being in the country without means of conveyance, and my known connexion with the pastor’s family, made suspicion certain to be directed towards that quarter. Indeed, it was the very first place in which a search would be endeavoured by the spiteful uncle, now made doubly furious by the treatment which his person had received, when I had with an effort upon myself refrained from taking yet more signal and sure vengeance upon him. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that I should immediately escape. The Papal authorities could expect no kind of aid from

those of Nismes as far as regarded any spiritual proceedings, or any punishment of offenders against the ecclesiastical power. But unhappily there was a graver charge against me of a civil description, and to prosecute that the police of Nismes was bound to lend its assistance. Once arrested, my destruction was imminent, for I was undeniably a subject of the Contât, and I must, in the ordinary course of justice, be delivered up to be dealt with at Avignon according to the ecclesiastical as well as the municipal laws.

“ After much consultation, it was resolved by Madame Gardein, the pastor’s daughter-in-law, to whom the story of our attachment had been confided by Louise, that she should disclose the whole circumstances of my case to her bosom friend, the Marchioness de Bagnolles, and implore her protection for me. She hastened to the Château, and found no difficulty in persuading so zealous a Protestant to favour the escape of one whose offences, no doubt, were secular as well as spiritual, but who nevertheless could have been in no serious jeopardy had priests never been. But the Marchioness was most reluctant to involve her husband in the responsibility of affording shelter to one charged with grave

offences. She justly observed that the same conduct in this respect, which to a woman is easily pardoned, because it is dictated by their compassion, might in a man, especially of the Marquess's rank, wear a less excusable aspect. It was, therefore, settled between these friends, that I should take refuge in the cave which was known to the Marchioness as having afforded shelter before to an unfortunate priest, the object of persecution for having changed his religion, at a time when the power of the clergy in Nismes was much more formidable than in the present day. She contrived to make the place more comfortable by causing the old housekeeper to work at it for a few hours, and to carry thither a sufficient number of blankets to make a tolerably warm bed. In the course of a few weeks the cold weather was sure to cease ; and there was always good shelter from the Mistral, the only cold of any consequence experienced in this part of Languedoc. I arrived the same night, and being secreted in the room where we now are, I was early next morning guided to the cave by the housekeeper, and I inhabited it unknown and uninterrupted from that day to the morning when you found out my retreat, the dear Marchioness passing a part of most days with me

during the summer and autumn, and only bringing me here when the cold weather commenced.

“These are my adventures; but on Louise have I never more set my eyes since that dreadful night, nor have I ever received any tidings whatever respecting her.”

Albert Lunel ceased, having now brought his singular and melancholy history to a close. It left on Chatillon's mind a mournful impression; above all he deeply sympathised with the separated and persecuted lovers, and he formed a hundred schemes for rescuing Louise from the clutches of her hateful tyrant, and restoring her to Albert's arms.

CHAPTER IV.

POPULAR CONTAGION.

THERE arrived a stranger at the Château, about this time, who formed a most interesting addition to its society. This was the Earl of Mornton, an English nobleman of high family in Ireland, and great accomplishments, a member of Parliament, and holding a considerable office in the government. He was intimately the friend of the reigning minister, and by common consent was destined to take the highest place among the statesmen of that country. Nothing could exceed the elegance and suavity of his manners; and, what gave him great success in French society, he spoke the language altogether like a native, but with a purity which not many natives ever attain. He was a man of extraordinary classical acquirements, being familiar with the ancient languages and literature, above the measure even of the most educated Englishmen. But his information

was general and it was accurate. Above all, his political views were enlarged and sound. He had deeply studied human affairs, and was a careful and most anxious observer of the aspect which things wore in France. At the period of his arrival having come through Paris, his opinion of what was then passing in the capital was naturally much sought after by those whom he found assembled at the Château, and in the course of the next day, the Marquess naturally summoned M. de Chapeley as well as others, to meet him. Catteau hearing of this arrival, and eager to display his own importance, and preach his own faith before so eminent a personage, rather than very anxious for information, made an excuse for calling in the morning, so that the Marquess, to show Lord Mornton a sample of the exalté school of politics in Languedoc, asked him to remain and dine with them. It appeared that his lordship had formed the most gloomy presage in contemplating the issue of the present crisis. Perhaps, from being less involved in the deep game that was playing, he, a bystander, might see more of it than those whose stakes were in the pool. Certainly he was an alarmist, at the least to the extent in which M. de Chapeley was alarmed;

as certainly his nerves were anything rather than of the texture which M. Catteau affected to despise, when he always from some such feebleness accounted for any cautious or prudent suggestion,—a texture which in fact, much more belonged to his own nerves and those of his reckless associates than to their adversaries, men of wise hesitation, and therefore of true courage, whom he made a practice of ridiculing and running down.

“The ground-work of my apprehensions,” said this noble person, “is the universal unsettlement of all received ideas, and ancient opinions, which I see to pervade all classes. Nothing any longer seems sacred; no institution is beyond discussion of its title; no opinion or principle is received as fixed and admitted. All is uncertain, undetermined; all under consideration and called in question, as if we were in the woods of America; nay, much more—for, in the new states of America, the principles of English jurisprudence are held sacred; and even the principles of the English constitution are received, though under new names and other forms. But here, in France, it is as if all things were set loose, as if all was at sea, as if some wave were passing over the old monarchy like that which overwhelmed the Old

World, and a new stratum were to be thrown up, and when consolidated by time, to be the successor of the one which had perished. I pray fire rather than the great but slow innovator, time, may not be in operation."

"I cannot," said the Chief Judge, "deny that of the last forty or fifty years the writings of our philosophers, helped by those of our wits, and by the chat of our polished circles—for discussion one cannot well call it—has produced a very great change in the opinions and the feelings of the public. But it has, of course, been unable to penetrate very low in an ill-educated country. The bulk of the people have not been materially affected by it."

"Nevertheless," said Lord Mornton, "observe that all influence, whether of sound learning or of a worse spirit, proceeds from the upper to the lower portions of society. You at first impregnate the higher bed, the upper narrow layer of the pyramid—thence the next a little larger takes its colour from the contact—and so the impregnation descends till it gets to the broader stratum of the people. I don't at all deny your position, that for the present, the higher classes and the professional men, with the more considerable merchants and bourgeoisie, are alone filled

with these new-fangled notions. But how long can this last? The poison is too sweet not to be eagerly swallowed; and in proportion to men's being destitute of property, of stake in the country, will be their eagerness to drink of the cup which is to make them equal with those who have the most."

"In that sense," said the Judge, "I agree with your lordship's position; and, indeed, I am very far from affirming that some progress has not already been made towards the evil consummation which you think you see approaching. Of this at least I am certain, that if those above allow this move in the wrong direction, the lower classes will be very far indeed from offering any resistance. Nay, they will much more probably be the first to join. The peasantry alone would feel any repugnance, but from their scattered position and their lesser information, they will be as nothing compared with the mobs of the towns."

"But in these circumstances," said the Baron, "only fancy the madness of the Archbishop issuing his mandate, inviting all the whole community to send in their opinions, to print whatever theories, or fancies, or vagaries they pleased on the

constitution and proceedings of the States General just convoked."

"I was at Paris," said the Earl, "when that began to operate, and the effect was magical. The whole town seemed at once to have been converted into a vast debating club. The corner of every street was thronged with knots of politicians; every wall was placarded with political addresses; and the booksellers' shops were bursting with tracts of all sorts and sizes, handling every point of political doctrine. I believe, with you, that this spirit is very much less diffused in the provinces; but I assure you it is no light matter in considering your present difficulties and dangers, that the capital should be peopled with political agitators and a political mob, while the rest of the country is comparatively sluggish and inert. I foresee from hence the tyranny of Paris over France, which really means of the mob over the community."

The wisdom as well as the eloquence of the English peer restrained M. Catteau for the greater part of the evening; but some one arrived from Nismes when they had left the dining-room, and brought accounts of the Archbishop's sudden resignation and flight to England. His last act, that of suspending

the payment of one third of the public engagements, and giving bills at a year's date in security of the debt, had operated most injuriously on the funds, and was regarded as an act of national bankruptcy. Brienne, in many things weak, was utterly inexcusable in his flight, which left the Court to struggle alone with difficulties his measures had first created, at least seriously aggravated. M. Catteau was now unable to contain himself. "We have, thank God, been relieved from the old minister; the keeper of the seals must follow his chief, and then"—"Why, my good friend," said the Chief Judge, "you seem to forget that M. Lamoignon has brought forward the most important reforms which our jurisprudence ever received, measures which are enough to immortalize their author."—"As for his measures," rejoined Catteau contemptuously, "they are all well enough in their way, and may be taken as an instalment."—"Why really, friend," said the president, "my lord will hardly believe that the reforms you treat so lightly are the immediate abolition of torture, and the universal improvement of our code of laws, both criminal and civil."—"Well, well," said Catteau, "I don't deny that this is something; it is an instalment; it is a sous paid of our debt, but

we must have the other nineteen of the livre.” —“ Cat-teau,” said M. Chapeley, “ this reference to instalments, and your livre, is what I am daily accustomed to hear, and you have no right to use the comparison ; for you will please to observe that you differ from all other creditors ; *they* have the sum of their demand fixed, and when they receive an instalment they let their debtor know fairly how much remains due, beyond which he cannot be charged. You have no such sum ; your unit, your integer, is concealed : and whatever you get, you pocket, making it only the ground and the means of obtaining more, while you never let us know the amount of your whole demand. But this I will say, that the reforms of M. Lamoignon are of the greatest value, and coupled with the King’s offer to give up the *Gabelle*,* and the recommendation of the Notables to abolish the *Corvée*,† and the plan originating with M. Calonne for imposing the taxes more equally, according to the men’s ability, form altogether such a body of real substantial improvement as no sweeping change in our constitution is ever likely to obtain for the people of this kingdom.”

* Oppressive tax, particularly on salt.

† Statute labour, due from peasants to their lords.

“My dear sir,” said Lord Mornton, “I cannot express how entirely I agree in the sound and wise, as well as liberal, view which you take of these matters. I am wholly with you (*J’abonde dans votre sens*). How cruel the disappointment would be to all good men and real lovers of their country, should we see the substance of real improvement sacrificed for the shadow of change, and this nation trying to obtain remote and imaginary good from some untried system, instead of seeking all the benefits they can get under a better working of the old!”—“The old,” said Catteau, “is rotten and worn out; it is good for nothing; it can yield no fruit.”—“Don’t, M. Catteau, mistake me,” the Earl said, “I am decidedly for amending it, in order that its better working may be secured. In this principle I have always agreed with Mr. Pitt, in whose zeal for reforming our Parliament I cannot always concur; but so far I approve his doctrine, that the foundation of our popular government must be strengthened in order to make the people sure of obtaining that great end of all government, a good administration of their affairs.”—“Ah,” said the Chief Judge, “in your changes you happily have a foundation to build upon; you already have an established representa-

tive system ; we have unhappily all to begin." "I quite agree with you," Lord Mornton said, "and I never was more annoyed, and even disgusted, than with the remonstrance of the 11th of April, in which your Parliament, with a preposterous affectation of antique lore, pretended to show that under all the three races of its monarchy, there had always been a control over the legislative power of the Crown ; perverting known facts, inventing checks, and after all leaving the nomination of the controlling body in most cases to the sovereign. It is a puerile document, wholly unworthy the grave body which issued it, and as deficient in honesty and good faith as in statesmanlike qualities—I should rather say, all other statesmanlike qualities. No, no, as you say, all is to begin unfortunately."

"Why, instead of regarding this as a misfortune," M. Catteau replied, "I rather rejoice at it. Heaven be praised that we have nothing to hamper and restrain us. We have the ground all cleared away for a new building, and may suit our taste in the plan. See if we don't raise a magnificent castle to lodge freedom in."—"I pray," the Judge said very seriously, "you may not dig a dungeon for the free." "What," asked Catteau,

“do you think we are to be duped at this time of day with your *Cours Plénières*, with the mockery of a constitution lately attempted to be palmed upon us, and merely to suspend the Parliaments and enable the King to break his promise of convoking the States?”—“Why, certainly not,” M. Chapeley replied, “I am as far from approving that measure as you can be yourself. It was anything rather than a wise one. The *Cour Plénière* was to be, both in its structure and its functions, a mere tool in the king’s hands; to be composed of the princes, prelates, marshals, and other grandees, with only twelve deputies from the Parliament, all the others to be nominees of the Crown—while the meeting of this new Assembly of Notables, for it was nothing else, was to depend on his majesty’s pleasure.”—“I don’t imagine,” said the Englishman, “there ever was a much greater blunder committed than this scheme, which, with all the mysterious secresy employed to wrap it up, was prematurely discovered, and when made known really seems to have done more towards aggravating the existing ferment than any other move of the ill-fated and worse advised Court. One thing must ever be borne in mind during such a crisis as the present. If you mean to allay the dis-

content by concession, by travelling in the direction of the movement party, either you must go a good way towards that purpose, or you may lay your account with increasing rather than stemming the mischief. But anything flimsy, colourable, and even betraying sinister designs, only increases the evil; it exasperates, by raising a doubt of your good faith."—"I could not, however, have expected," said the Judge, "that this would make the noblesse, even the clergy, take part against the Court. Think of a remonstrance signed by forty-seven peers and bishops, and in the King's present extremity! These are but gloomy signs of the times, my lord."—"They tell me," said Catteau, with visible exultation, "that the feelings of the Parisians, down to the lowest mob, are exceedingly strong. The whole town seems moved with political ardour, and we surely shall see all old abuses shaken to pieces."—"Beware, M. Catteau," Lord Mornton said very seriously, "beware how you place the pruning-knife to lop off abuses in the thousand hands of the mob, whose many heads are proverbial, and amount not in the whole to one."—"Why, really, one would think, Milord, that in your free country the maxims of some canting moralists, theological optimists,

were the rule of the state; and that you held whatever is, is right."—This sally was delivered in a tone to show that one person at least of the company was very abundantly satisfied with it. But his contentment was not of long duration. "Why, truly so," said the Earl. "But I should suppose there is another country where certain of its inhabitants hold that whatever is, is wrong, and, possibly as a practical inference whereon to ground their cause, add another maxim, that whatever is not, ought to be."—M. Catteau showed little mind to prolong the discussion, and soon afterwards retired to join his club at Nismes, and to brag of having silenced an English aristocrat.

The English noble was not merely a statesman, an orator (as unfortunately all English statesmen must needs be), and a fine scholar; he was the delight of polished society; for beside the charm of captivating manners, and of the greatest personal beauty, he possessed a wit that never failed, never tired, never exceeded the bounds of perfect propriety and good taste, nor ever mixed itself with gall any more than it ever ran to coarseness. He was also fond of society, and devoted to the fair sex. It is not wonderful then that he was attracted by the

Countess, and her first impression upon him, both by her brilliant form, and her superior talents, could not be otherwise than powerful. But it was of short duration. Her hardness, her coldness, her selfishness, soon pierced through her charms; and altogether disinclined his lordship to swell the crowd of her devotees. He had a notion of which he never could divest himself, as he said in discussing the matter with Ernest whom he had known in Paris. "I will fairly own," he said, "that of a cold woman I always have my suspicions. The heat exists somewhere; and if not in the right place, it will break out in the wrong." "Whereabout," said he, "do you imagine it burns in our fair friend?"—"Why, where but in her temper? I feel as certain as if I had seen her provoked, that that woman can be easily thrown off her guard."—"You had better not try the experiment," said Ernest.—"But, my good friend," the Earl answered, "I should not so much mind mere hot temper; it is not very becoming, but in a woman it is not dangerous. My fear is that your cold and hard woman has worse faults. She is in an unnatural position; she is masculine without our firmness, and is apt to have the bad parts without the good of our sex. Besides, has

her ice never melted, her hardness never been mollified?"

"Why, I have sometimes thought," said Ernest, "the Baron had a chance. Assuredly she laid him prostrate at first sight. No sooner came he in view of Mont Blanc, than he seemed to have sworn that he should either scale this unapproachable eminence, and thaw this eternal glacier, or perish in the attempt. That, you know, even your snow-woman holds for something—takes in extreme good part."

"But how did she and he go on? I suppose she relished him?"

"As who does not? His various learning; his brilliant wit; his drollery, for it now soars to the Attic heights and now sweeps the Doric levels; his grave, serious even severe, though God wot never ascetic moments; his liveliness, alternating with sarcasm, like the clouds which course along the sky, now hiding and now revealing the sun, now screening us from his glare, and now descending in tempests of thunder—all this must have made a strongish impression on a very clever woman, though he has absolutely none of the qualities which win the ordinary female mind; he is plain, nay, as near being ugly as any intelligent countenance will allow; he sings not,

plays not, paints not, dances not ; he neither hunts, nor hawks, nor shoots ; he gambles not ; and he dresses so that, were he to appear in our *salons* at Paris, he must either serve a long noviciate, or attain high station, or make some happy hit that all can talk about—else success he never could have ; add to all which, manners, though high enough bred, yet abrupt, a temper not under strict control, and as much pride as falls to one man's share."

"Is he amiable in other respects?" asked Lord Mornton ; "for somehow he holds himself so much aloof, that the more one sees of him, the less one knows of him."

"Amiable it is quite impossible any one can be with his hot temper, and the sin raging in him without control whereby our first parents fell. But he is also revengeful, and I should say could forgive more easily than he can forget."

"Do you hold him selfish?"

"In the utmost sense of the word. I don't mean to say he is incapable of generosity ; he is of course generous, because he is proud and cannot stoop to reckon pounds, shillings, and pence (*louis et livres*). He is munificent by force of being magnificent, would give to deserving objects rather than

to others, but must give to some, that he may be above counting cost, and also make men feel grateful and dependent. But I think he despises, perhaps hates, all he confers favours upon."

"Is he a religious man with all this?"

"Why, he is a good Catholic, if you will, and I dare say condescends to bow at church, which he never will do at any earthly court. But as for religion, his share of it would I believe lie in a nutshell."

"And yet, with all this, you tell me two odd things—he is devotedly fond of his niece, wholly wrapt up in her; and he is admired and liked, perfectly unamiable as you paint him, by a woman of such strong sense and vehement nature as the Countess."

"As for his niece, no doubt he concentrates all his tenderness in his love of her, who adores him; but as for as the Countess, it is her kind of nature to take a fancy no one else would, and by dint of his industry and his wit, he seems extremely to resemble an amiable person. They are not unlike in this; they are both fine to look at from a distance, like bright thistles set round with tearing thorns."

"But, M. Deverell, let me say, I have been won-

derfully struck with his young niece. I had a walk on the terrace with her before dinner, and, though I had heard much of her from the Marchioness, I never was more pleased or more surprised. She possesses extraordinary powers, and her manners are as delightful as I ever yet saw in any person. What a relief from Madame de Chatillon's hardness, all handsome as she is, to repose upon the sweetness of Mdlle. de Moulin!"

"Aye, that you may well say," exclaimed Ernest, with more enthusiasm than could have been expected from a Parisian muscadin, only that he really was above that caste.—"She is, indeed, truly admirable. I believe a more delightful being never animated mortal clay. Her genius is, as you perceive, extraordinary, and it is not confined to one or two walks. She writes beautiful verses, full of the finest imagination, chastened by proportionably severe taste. Her quickness of apprehension is almost more than human; but her judgment, tender as are her years, is the most true, the most unerring, insomuch that my aunt tells me she can consult her upon any difficult point of conduct, with the certainty of obtaining sound and useful advice; and I know her uncle

constantly relies on her opinion, even in the most weighty matters."

"With all this, which is strange," said Lord Mornton, "her feelings seem sufficiently lively; and yet do they not warp her judgment?"

"Lively they are," he answered, "and even to acuteness, yet her judgment is calm and unruffled; her mental vision never obscured; her decision never warped by them. She is the most affectionate creature alive; and with a natural impetuosity of temper, she yet continually keeps it under restraint, as if distrusting herself, and would feel agony were she in any sally of it to give pain for a moment to any human being; for her whole existence is devoted to comfort those that love her, and help those who appeal to her unceasing charity and kindness."

"I grieve to see," said his lordship, "that this most lovely person enjoys but delicate health."

"Alas, she does," Ernest answered, "and she has often told my aunt, that she reckons not upon length of days. This, with her natural sensibility, has made her profoundly religious; piety is as it were a part of her very nature, interweaves itself with all her habits and engrosses all her thoughts, yet without one atom of harshness, or intolerance, or any of the other

features of fanaticism or spiritual pride. It only guides, tempers, adorns her sweet and innocent life."

"Well really, M. Deverell, you speak with warmth, if not with poetry, on this favourite topic; I should have thought one of your habits and experience the last person in the world to become enamoured of a young person like Mdlle. de Moulin."

"Oh, as for enamoured, such an idea never entered my imagination; but I do assure your lordship, it is impossible to live as I have done for a couple of months in her society and that of her uncle without feeling a deep interest in them, and in their melancholy friendship."

"And why melancholy?" asked the Earl.

"Alas, it is his mournful lot to be wholly wrapt up in his niece, and all the while to know by how slender a thread hang, suspended as it were between life and death, all his joys on earth, all (as he has told my aunt) that makes life at all desirable to him, and even gives it any interest at moments when the storm of ambition is hushed, and the passions of his nature cease to rage. He has sometimes heaved a sigh after a life of quiet and retirement, in which his existence might glide tranquil

and smooth, only occupied with cultivating Emeline's mind, helping her genius to unfold itself in some divine work of fancy, and sharing the tender affections of her kindly nature."—"And what impression has all this gentleness made on the Countess?" said the Earl.

"Why, at first none at all. She conceived her to be a mere nonentity. Since her fancy has been somewhat taken with the Baron, she can better bear his niece. But it is plain they don't suit one another; and Mdlle. de Moulin can't at all affect a friendship or admiration which she cannot feel."

"You say she writes verses?"

"Very rarely, but delicately and tenderly when she does. She will, I dare say, if you ask her, show you a slight kind of song she lately gave her uncle on his complaining of his goddess's coldness; she took the Countess's part and defended it."

"I don't much think she will let me have those verses. Can't you manage to get me them?"

"Why, they are not many, I think I can repeat them. They run somehow as this. You know she speaks and writes English almost as well as your lordship does French.

“ You ask what profit is in love,
Graced with Platonic name,
When souls, like spirits from above,
Lie wrapt in lambent flame ?

Then, Zio, say, in woe or weal,
What more can mortals gain,
Than doubling every joy they feel,
And halving every pain ?

“ Very well, very well,” said the Earl, “ but I could mend them, though the innocent authoress will not. It should be not ‘ Graced with Platonic name,’ but ‘ Where glows no fierce desire,’ and as you cannot say ‘ lambent fire,’ for the rhyme it must be ‘ heavenly fire.’ ”

“ Well, perhaps,” said Ernest, “ you may be in the right ; I am no doctor in these matters. But Mdlle. de Moulin would assuredly reject your amendment.”

Lord Mornton asked if she often amused herself with writing verses. “ No,” said Ernest, “ she rather undervalues this accomplishment, holding it good for nothing, because always sure to be possessed in mediocrity. However, she has some pretensions as a painter of still life. I will give you her sketch of our Languedoc ‘ Summer Evening’—

The sun's last dying rays now gild the scene,
And gentle twilight sheds the mildest glow
O'er house, hill, tree, empurpling all the green,
And the blue rills that warbling glide below.

The lambent lightning gleams athwart the sky ;
Each floweret spreads its sweetness through the grove ;
The fire-fly glancing flits from bough to bough ;
And wakeful turtle-doves breathe out their love.

The balmy air now scarcely stirs the leaves,
So justly tempered, that each sentient frame
No warmth, no chill from its soft gale receives,
But life flows on in smooth unbroken stream.

In this sweet season mere existence charms
The raptured sense—rapture without alloy ;
'Tis perfect love—but love without alarm ;
'Tis calmest pleasure—but which ne'er can cloy.

The soul looks upwards in such hours as these,
While all the feelings to devotion move ;
Each sense seems kindly lent us but to please,
And perfect wisdom breathes in perfect love.

The Earl expressed his favourable opinion of these slight lines ; but said that he still better liked her judicious remark on poetical merit.

When the society of the Château met at breakfast next morning, they found the important intelligence arrived from Nismes that the King had,

after considerable hesitation, recalled M. Necker to the government, and placed the control of the finances in his hands, as it had been eight years before. The joy universally excited by this great event was described as unbounded; the new minister was the idol of the people; their suspicions of the Court were dispelled; their confidence in the King was restored; and nothing remained but for the great financier to retrieve public credit, which his wise measures and the belief in both his skill and integrity promised would speedily be done, and to prepare for the meeting of the States next spring. It was further stated that the new minister prefaced his acceptance of the seals by a condition, the theme of general praise, that he should serve without any salary or emolument whatever.

“Well,” said the Count, “I should like much to hear what the Chief Judge says on this event; and also Lord Mornton’s opinion; but he rises late, I think.”—“Yes,” said Ernest, “his health is delicate, and he is going to pass the winter in Italy to recruit it. But,” he added, “I can tell you what M. Catteau says, for I rode over to Nismes early and met him at the post-office, when the intelligence from Paris was announced. He said that this made

all secure, for the Court and the King were beaten, and Necker was a republican at heart, and, if not, was too feeble to resist the sovereign people."

"And did you make no remark on such an ungenerous return for the King's great goodness?"

"No," said Ernest, "but M. de Balaye, who was standing by, did. He said, 'Catteau, you and your party will not end before the streets of Paris run with blood.'"

"Well, of course he protested and denied."

"Oh, nothing of the kind: he said, 'Why, for the matter of that, we have some need for bleeding at Nismes as well as at Paris. But be comforted, Balaye, it won't be your blood or mine that will run; it will be the pure aristocratic liquor, of which they have so much that they can well spare a little.'"

"Indeed," said the Marquess, "then M. Catteau never more darkens my door; of that be assured. I had formerly thought only of his violence and his folly. He now appears to me in a more odious light, and I believe from other indications, that here are at Nismes, as the Baron lately found in Orange, and elsewhere on his journey, persons of the most fierce and even sanguinary dispositions, ready

to turn whatever may happen to the most violent account."

Lord Mornton having entered the parlour, and taken his seat under the book-case (for he had breakfasted in his own room), laid down the book which he had opened, and joined the company at table. He expressed his reprobation of this Catteau and his bloodhound pack, as he termed the party, with a vehement eloquence which shook those who heard him, and made them believe all that had been said of his great talents for public life. "But," he said, "there is unhappily one remark of this cannibal lawyer which is too well founded. While he, and such as he, are aspiring to lead, and while the populace of Paris, and perhaps of other great towns, are so ready to follow, assuredly a firmer hand than M. Necker's is wanted to govern France. These mischief-mongers are already reckoning on his pliancy, and, as Catteau said, his heart, even if not republican enough for their wishes, is not stout enough for such a crisis as the present." The Baron, who knew that excellent man personally, bore ample testimony to his pure honour and amiable qualities. "We want more for a public man;" the Earl said, "that is the best foundation, but we must build

upon it." "I believe," said the Baron, "that his political integrity is equally without a stain. Nothing can be more disinterested than his whole conduct when last in office, and he has begun, we see, his new reign with a noble act, the refusal of all emolument to himself."—"But," said the Earl, "even integrity will not now suffice. We must have a firm pilot to weather the storm, as well as an honest master above all design of playing falsely with the owner and cheating the underwriters." "I much question," the Marquess said, "the wisdom of this same refusal of salary. M. Necker, who made his five or six millions as a banker, can well afford to serve for nothing. He has no right to impose a like condition on those who are without his means, no right to put them in the dilemma of refusing to be generous and disinterested, or confessing to be poor." "I rather differ with you there," said Lord Mornton; "in general what you say is quite true and just; but mark that the present is eminently a financial crisis, which will require the greatest saving in all departments, and in my opinion M. Necker has done well in arming himself with the power to retrench all salaries, by refusing to take any himself. But for this consider-

ation, and regarded as a mere boast, a measure to gain public confidence, I should have despised as I should any other popularity-trap.”—“However,” said the Baron, “I entirely agree with your lordship in the opinion that more is now wanted than even the strictest public virtue. Courage of the highest order, moral courage, the boldness to face difficulties of the worst and most opposite kind, the resolution to act on a sound system, regardless of the people when you differ with them, nay the determination to encounter the utmost hatred, if need be, of those who, while they moved in the right direction, you most cordially joined ; this is absolutely necessary now, and without this my Genevese friend will do nothing.”—“I wish,” said the Marquess, still hankering after his former opinion, “we may not pay dear for his disinterestedness. The amount of that salary which now intoxicates our countrymen, may prove to be very dearly purchased. Pray, Baron, what are his views respecting the States? He must have long since made up his mind upon the great points of discussion, and be prepared to act on his own views?”—“He has,” the Baron said, “a fixed determination on one of the questions ; on the other, he has not at all made up his mind. He will, I am

sure, determine in favour of allowing the Commons (*tiers état*), a number of deputies equal to those of the Nobles and Clergy united. The question of the three States voting apart or together, the real question of moment, he will leave to be determined when they meet.”—“Why,” said Lord Mornton, “there is absolutely not even common sense in this. To what purpose give the Commons a double representation? Unless the three are to vote together, what can it signify how many deputies go to form the single vote of the *tiers état* on any measure? No, no, depend upon it this Genevese *littérateur* means that they shall sit together, but, not daring to propose it, he will give the one such a numerical force as may compel the others to join them; and then the same force will carry whatever the Catteaus please to propose.”

The opinion thus entertained was combated, and feebly, by the Marquess remarking that the Archbishop's ordinance for constituting provincial assemblies, in order to make head against the Parliaments, obliged M. Necker so to shape his course, because it had both given the third estate a number equal to the other two in those bodies, and had intimated the plan of voting individually together, and not in sepa-

rate chambers, each of which should have one voice. But Lord Mornton justly made answer that the importance of these assemblies was as nothing compared with that of the States General, and that what possibly was even in their case a great error, could receive no excuse from the precedent when applied to the representation of the whole kingdom. "I own," he said, "that my fears are great of the end to which all this may lead. If the violence of miserable unprincipled men, joined by those who always become the dupes of such leaders, the sincere and well-meaning, but wrong-headed, enthusiasts, shall succeed in gaining the mastery, with the base mobs of the great towns, and above all of Paris, to be the instruments of their mischief, I foresee nothing but ruin to this noble kingdom. A reign of mob-tyranny will lay waste the country; and you will end by having a much worse government established than any you now complain of, after passing through the most intolerable tyranny of all—that of the multitude. The Catteau murderers will be the sacrifice of their own wild and wicked schemes; but unhappily the worthy will fall with the vile; and, instead of gaining by the convulsion, you will end far worse than you began. Believe me, if there be a truth

more sound than another in the science of government, and in that of human nature, it is this—that the people who hasten to improve their political lot faster than the safety of society permits, are as sure of going wrong, and coming to a bad end, as the individual who makes haste to be rich. Anarchy and slavery await the people, as the gibbet awaits the man.”

The accounts from Paris, in letters received at Nismes, represented the temper of the people as extremely unsatisfactory. There was every indication of a disposition to excitement; the alarm was increased by the unpromising prospect of the harvest; and all who considered the subject at the Château felt disposed to take Lord Mornton’s view, that the new minister was by no means the pilot required to weather the gathering storm. “I never,” said his lordship, “could have so high an opinion of him after his resignation in 1781, as I had been inclined to entertain before. His first administration was marked certainly by great financial skill and unsullied integrity. It also showed great and perilous coveting of popular applause—a rock in every statesman’s course, and to be carefully avoided. But when he refused to remain and preside over the execution of

his own plans, and refused at a moment of great embarrassment for the King's service, as well as for the country, and retired merely because the jealousy of Maurepas, the prime minister, refused him a seat in the cabinet ; probably, too, because he conceived the attacks through the press were encouraged by that colleague, I perceived, if not a man of little mind, certainly a second-rate man. It savoured of the petty, pedantic, self-conceited, Geneva character.” —“I go along with you so far,” said the Baron, “that I always considered this resignation to be the worst passage in my friend's public life. Yet it must be admitted, as to the libels which you mention, that the conduct of M. Maurepas was wholly inexcusable. There is not the shadow of a doubt that he set on the slanderers, and his agent was neither more nor less than Ste. Foix, who held a household place at court. M. Necker thought that his credit in the country, and consequently his power of serving it, was gone, if the King did not show his countenance and support of him by the mark of favour which was made a condition of his remaining in office. You will admit, too, Milord, that the minister who at such a season of difficulty had the whole weight of our shattered finances on his shoulders, being refused a place

in the council which had to decide questions of peace and war, and commercial treaties, was an absurdity without example.”—“ That,” his lordship said, “ I don’t deny ; I only say, first that M. Maurepas was eighty-four years old, and that had M. Necker remained a few months he must have succeeded him as prime minister ; next, that he was very ready to suppose his dislike of abuse merely originated in the dread of losing his power to serve the country. He lost that power much more effectually by retiring and letting the finances be mismanaged for seven long years. I have seen his correspondence, and that of his daughter, upon his lately taking office. I found in one of the letters an anecdote given in his praise,—that on receiving the news of his restoration to power he exclaimed, ‘ Oh ! had I only the Archbishop’s fifteen months ! But now it is too late.’—And why too late ? Because he went out and let in first Calonne and then the Archbishop.”—“ Do you believe he offered his daughter, Mademoiselle Necker, in marriage to your friend Mr. Pitt ?” said the Countess. “ I am sure of it,” he answered, “ and a little bit of official pedantry made the offer the more ridiculous. He being at the head of the French treasury, Mr. Pitt of the English, the proposal

went through neither more nor less than Mr. George Rose, the worthy secretary of the treasury in England.”—“When you call the proposal ridiculous,” she answered, “are you aware of the extraordinary qualities and accomplishments of Mademoiselle Necker, independent of her being the richest heiress in France, perhaps in Europe? Any man, be he your minister himself, might have been proud of such a match.”—“Why, Madam,” said his lordship, “I am sorry, and it was wrong, that I spoke slightly, even in appearance, of any proposition in which, Mademoiselle Necker was concerned; for I hear from all quarters that her talents, spirit, and information, are of the highest order. But I was thinking of Mr. Pitt rather than of her: he is not a marrying man at all; less so, I may say more the reverse of it, than any one I know; and as for money I am sure all the wealth of Peru would never make him listen to a proposal which on other accounts he might wish to decline.”—“I will add,” said Ernest, “that much as her fortune might edify, and her talents charm me, I would give up half the one and all the other for a moderate addition to the stock of beauty which at present stands in Mademoiselle Necker’s name.”

CHAPTER V.

VARIETY.

IT was the custom at the Château to invite on the Saturdays a larger number of guests than usually composed the society. There was no general invitation, which so near a large town would have been inconvenient, especially as party and sect greatly divided the inhabitants of Nismes. But it was a day which pretty certainly brought together a considerable party ; and therefore, the young, the women, the literary men, and those ambitious of display in any manner, much enjoyed being asked to the party which agreeably closed the weekly labours of the one class, and the amusements of the other.

But among those who liked to come on Saturday was not M. Liel (called by the wits of Nismes Fiel), who eschewed such assemblies, declaring that the more of his fellow-creatures (who could, however, in no wise be called his *semblables*) were gathered

together, he was sure to find the more folly and the more baseness; and he, therefore, prayed the Marquess to receive his respects on any other day of the seven. It must be observed, that he so far rejected the Nismes *alias* as to derive his descent from the Roman family of Lelius, one of the few things he was vain of. But it was remarked, that if he had the wisdom of his ancestor, it could hardly be termed "*meek*" or "*gentle*" as Horace called his.

When Lord Mornton entered the room the second day after his arrival, he found this singular character, of whom he had the evening before heard from the Marchioness enough to make him, a curious observer of human nature, desirous of seeing him. He perceived, perched in an obscure corner of the library, where on that day the company chanced to assemble before dinner, an elderly man of meagre form, and a face singularly thin, and dried up, with an expression that seemed to justify the Nismes jest upon his name, and a kind of long opening of the mouth, that could scarcely be called a grin, for it was habitual, but could still less be termed a smile, for that was no production of those latitudes. There was nothing otherwise in the countenance at all ugly or repulsive; indeed, it bore a resemblance to what

he recollected of Voltaire's. Much time did not elapse before he had occasion to observe that the accounts he had received of this person's misanthropy had not been exaggerated ; and that it was far from having the disagreeable quality of other men's, for it made not at all that exception, which their hatred and contempt generally makes, the exception of themselves, and what belongs to themselves.

The Count having observed that M. Duras's jokes (a wit of the province) were somewhat far-fetched, "They may be so," said M. Liel, "and I'll answer for their not being worth the carriage."—"Is it true," asked the Countess, "that he lives by his wits?"—"Why if so, Madam, he must have but a meagre table."—"I am told," the Marquess said, "that he is an excellent man, very charitable according to his means towards other poor authors, and no one can find any fault with him that I can learn, if it be not a certain bitterness of expression which after all may mean no more than that it is his humour."—"I am sorry I don't know him, and should like to make his acquaintance," the Marchioness said.—"Why, perhaps it would be better for his reputation," said M. Liel, "that you should not, after the fine character just drawn of him." The

Marquess had unintentionally come upon two sore places with M. Liel; he had praised generosity and censured evil-speaking (*médiance*), his guest being as avaricious as he was misanthropic, and regarding any generosity in money as personal to himself, equally with any generosity in praise. He therefore boiled, or at least, simmered over, on the heat thus applied to him.—“Why, Marquess, as for his charities, how came you to know of them? Does he blow a trumpet when he gives a penny—that being all he ever has in his pocket? For my part, I defy my right hand to know what my left does; I keep both alike in my pocket, well knowing that if they be not there some other person’s are sure to get in. Then, as to his evil speaking, it is perhaps the thing he most deserves to be commended for. He is honest, I suppose, and says what he thinks of his neighbours; and if they would all honestly say what they think of him, you would call them evil-speakers also.”

Lord Mornton was delighted with this original, and still more when some one having mentioned that Madame Leblanc, (whom he particularly disliked) declared the evening party at the Pignerols’ last night to be the best of the whole season, especially with a

view to the supper, and that she foresaw they would repeat it, after such success: "Aye," said Liel, "I dare say we may foretel future events as our Roman ancestors did, from the bowels of the swine." It was said that there was no blame in the lady's being fat, any more than in another being lean, and that good-natured people generally are fat.—"But as she can have no such title to her shape," said he, "she certainly derives it from her gluttony alone. I never knew such a compound of talk about the spirit and concern about the flesh, in all my experience."—"Why, M. Liel," said the Marchioness, "I really always thought that you had been a religious man, and wonder to hear you blame Madame Leblanc for it."—"And who says I am not, Madam? But if I were compelled, as a condition of my devotion, to believe not only in religion, but in those who profess it, my faith would be soon at a low ebb. Religion gives me unspeakable consolation, and, therefore, I hate hypocrites."—"Consolation, truly," said the Marchioness, "we can hardly be said to have any other in this world."—"I agree with you entirely," he answered; "there is nothing so much raises us above it, abstracts us so much from it."—The Marchioness's face lighted up to hear

such edifying sentiments. "Oh, yes, well may you say so! Well may you thus justly praise that grand solace."—"Yes, Madam, it is my refuge from the follies and the vileness of men—it abstracts me from them—it frees me from their contact—it holds out even the prospect of one day escaping from them altogether, and seeing them receive the condign reward of their conduct hereafter, which always contrives to avoid meeting with its due in this life."—"Alas, M. Liel," she replied, "I fear these are not quite the sentiments a religious mind should have."—"Madam, depend upon it that the mixture of cant and mutual flattery is the bane of our devotion, as it is of all social intercourse. To meet together for the purpose of oiling over one another, of muttering out praise of one's self and one's neighbour, to use our gift of speech for the purpose of concealing our thoughts both of others and of ourselves, to encourage every one his neighbour in all his weaknesses and all his wickednesses, by praising the one as amiable, and depicting the other as necessary—believe me all this is as foreign to true religion as it is to common honesty."—"Well, my good old friend," said the Marquess, "no one will accuse you of such things, though I often think you

somewhat uncharitable.”—“I hope and trust you very, very often do—but I am not much better than other people after all. I lately, as M. Deverell can witness, saw a gentleman give a beggar a livre piece, and I never even remarked (what I certainly must needs feel)—that he did it either by mistake or from ostentation. I said not one word, whatever I might think.”—“No, that you did not,” said Ernest, “and when I asked why you had not set the gentleman right, your answer was, if he did it from ostentation, you were only playing his game, and you never could be sure it was not so.”

A kind of ejaculation, in the nature of a grunt, from M. Liel, testified the arrival of the Chevalier in the library. His good-natured countenance, betokening a spirit of contentment with himself and all about him; and his hilarity, ever unbroken, with his jolly humour, never venting itself in an ill-natured observation that did not manifestly proceed from mirth, and never was intended to wound, proved a source of acute suffering to M. Liel—indeed seemed to be a standing rebuke of him. The *Sieur Gaspar* used to say that the two taken and used together might make a good salad—the one being oil as the other was vinegar. Before the time came, how-

ever, for showing the Earl how impossible it was to mix them together, the announcement was made that the company were served, and they adjourned to the dining-room. It soon appeared to what tune M. Liel's politics were set. He professed his entire satisfaction with the news that had last arrived of fresh tumults in Paris, and of Necker having been recalled amidst great popular enthusiasm. The Earl ventured to hope that he did not partake of the joy which these events had diffused among the Cateau party. "But I do," said Liel. "Not one of the vile fry is happier with it than I am. They are, perhaps, more my utter detestation than any other class of the people ; and I am sure that after fulfilling the object of their mission here on earth from their native regions below, they will themselves be thoroughly punished by each other before their return home to their father's warm and commodious mansion."—In his views of the probable result to be expected from these changes, the kind-hearted old gentleman did not differ widely from his lordship ; though he regarded their consequences with somewhat different feelings—his being those by no means of universal benevolence, though they so far partook of rigid justice, that they were pretty equally favour-

able to all descriptions of his fellow creatures.—“I reckon the thing more than begun; I consider the revolution as already settled,” said he.—“Then,” said his lordship, “you think it not merely begun, but over.”—“Over? Heaven forbid! I think it going on, and on it must go; but I hope to see it produce the condign punishment of all those classes of this huge overgrown country, with its more disproportioned aneurism of a capital, a false heart beating away, morbid itself, and filling the whole system with disease. There is scarcely one portion of our vile generation that I do not hope to see speedily suffer according to their deserts—perhaps beyond them; however, I don’t require that. I shall be quite satisfied that they suffer according to their deserts—that suffering will be sufficiently ample; it will leave little to desire.”

In the evening the company were agreeably entertained by looking at the Prince Caramelli’s last drawings. He had not of late shown any, as he had made some excursions, and wanted to finish his sketches somewhat before exhibiting them. The display of his pencil gave little pleasure to M. Liel. His own love of natural scenery was strong, and he regarded with jealousy all the attempts to represent

it on paper or on canvas. To some of the Prince's sketches he objected their being obscure, and leaving great doubts of what the different parts were intended to represent. The style was, indeed, somewhat dashy, and here and there a little indistinct. "That rock," said Liel, "to the right"—"Excuse me," the artist said, "it is a tree."—"I crave your pardon, I took it for a rock;" and he fell into, or perhaps rather made, other mistakes of the same kind; so that he recommended to the Prince a plan which he said would obviate all such difficulties. "I would have your Excellency," he said, "take the trouble of writing in the margin the names of the different objects intended to be represented, and connecting those names by a slight line with the parts of the drawing. The engineers, a sufficiently accurate race of men, always do so, and it saves trouble and prevents mistakes." It was, however, said by the Marchioness, in order to mitigate the Prince's chagrin at these criticisms, that M. Liel did not even much admire the great masters. "That I really cannot allow," said Liel; "I do greatly admire them—that is, as greatly as I can. Who does not love to gaze on Rubens' colouring, and Raphael's drawing?—though" (as if willing to eat in

the praise he had been unwarily drawn into uttering) "I grant you there is as bad drawing in Rubens, as there is bad colouring in Raphael; and indeed, even as to colouring, who can quite stomach all the crimson and purple of the Fleming's fat, flabby, coarse and dropsical children, any more than their shapes? or who does not see a hardness and statuary outline in many of the Roman's figures, as well as a copper and mulatto colour, making one think he had been rather representing old Roman statues, which were coloured, than living persons?"—"But," said the Marquess, "all this is a decided point; we dare no longer dispute the judgment of ages."—"No," said M. Liel, "and because we are left bound on the merits of those who are gone, must we forge fetters for ourselves as to those who have no sentence to produce in their favour? We come into the grown up world with our minds chained by education, as we come into life with our limbs swathed. Therefore let us keep ourselves free to judge when we can. On that maxim I act."

The Prince perhaps thought he might charm the ear of this severe critic, though he had failed to please his eye; and he began to hum a tune and strike a few notes on his guitar. But unfortu-

nately a general expression of satisfaction among the ladies showed that there was admiration stored up, secreted as it were, and ready to find vent: this M. Liel could not stand, and he escaped to bed before any *bravo* could be heard to grate upon his ear. He had the better excuse for this that his maxim was to get up with the cock and lie down with the crow, which, according to the old proverb, is the secret of avoiding the tomb.*

The conversation, as soon as the music was over, naturally enough rolled upon him who had been driven away by it. "He is," said M. de Bagnolles, "one of the strangest men I ever yet knew, and of the most unsparing misanthropy. Nor does it arise from misfortune, as is often the case; for his circumstances are affluent; he has never known affliction. But possibly living alone, and having always indulgences within his reach, has brought him to disregard whatever had no difficulty in the pursuit, and to undervalue mankind, whom he knew perhaps chiefly by bad report." The Earl remarked that he seemed to deprive himself of much gratification by

* Lever du poule, coucher du corbeau,
Preserve l'homme du tombeau.

his determination never to admire. “Why,” said the Marquess, “it is not true that he never admires. He is enthusiastic in his love of nature. It seems as if there was a certain fund of admiration in our composition, and that, when denied an escape in one direction, it finds vent in another. This delight which he takes in natural objects is one reason why he won’t easily bear pictures affecting to represent them, as you might see the other day.”—“Has he any relish for poetry?” the Earl asked. “I should suppose little.”—“Or rather none,” the Marquess answered, “but he is patient of it compared with eloquence, which enrages him; he says it has all the folly of poetry and its emptiness; it is poetry under a false pretence; indeed he regards it as a kind of personal insult; add to which his unconquerable horror of lawyers and Romish preachers who are the practisers we of France most familiarly know in the rhetorical art. Our pastors read quietly and impressively their discourses, and have none of the action of the curés, which, he says, might save the congregation an emetic. I have heard him say, that some addresses are directed to the understanding, some to the heart, but these oily ones go straight to the stomach.”—“How can he see the Maison Carrée

and the Pont du Gard unmoved?" asked the Prince. —"Why, as they are works of men he naturally must condemn them; but then these men were Romans, and he makes some little exception in their favour, on account of his descent, which he firmly believes to be Roman; so that he accounts it a kind of personal or family concern, and says nothing against them, if he says not much in their behalf."—"Has he never shown any relaxation of his dislike towards the species of the present day?" asked the Earl.—"I should really say," the Marquess smilingly answered, turning to Mdlle. de Moulin, "that you are the person he is most tolerant of."—"Yet, dear Marquess," she said, "pray see how far my conquest of him, which you often rally me about, has proceeded. I showed him, and at his own desire, a copy of verses, and he said it was hard to read, as I grant he had a right to say, but he let me down mightily by adding, 'however, the words have another defect; when you have decyphered them they are not worth reading.'"—"Well, Mademoiselle, don't be offended; this is nothing to what he said, when some one having met 'old Leblanc, with the Abbé in a carriage,' said 'they were a fine pair,' not observing Madame Leblanc was in the room, behind that per-

fidious screen of books, and she good humouredly enough answered, ‘oh, there are plainer women than old Leblanc, I promise you!’—‘I deny it,’ said M. Liel; and then she went on to observe, ‘Well, well, that ’s your humour to say so; I repeat my assertion, and also that there are worse men than the Abbé.’ ‘There may,’ said he, ‘but I don’t know them.’ ‘I assure you,’ the Marchioness added, “his humour goes consistently through all his life. Don’t you recollect, my dear (*mon bon ami*), your experiment on his impossibility of his praising any thing?”—“Oh! yes; it was rather entertaining. He is particularly fond of a roast turkey, and never of course allows himself such an indulgence, though a great gourmand. I took extreme pains to have the very best the whole country could afford, and it was roasted most carefully, and delicately stuffed with truffles. He manifestly approved it; for he ate somewhere about half the bird, and said not a word; whereupon I was resolved to hear what objection he had to make, and asked him carelessly what he thought of it.—‘I have seen worse,’ was the full extent of his commendation. He never has a servant, a man at least, thinking there is a slight difference in favour of the sex, and sure that if he

had a valet their mutual hatred would amount to fury, as it probably might.”—“One of our men,” the Marchioness said, “attends him when he sleeps at the Château. He gives him, I find from my maid, two sous on departing, and once or twice when a new servant unaccustomed to his ways, looked at this gift as if surprised, M. Liel said,—‘Oh! give it me again; I made a mistake,’ and took one sous back.”—“Is this pattern of Christian charity for the honour of the Established Church?” Lord Morn-ton asked. “Oh no!” the Marchioness said, “we (*nous autres*) have the benefit of his alliance; and I assure you, if his general hatreds are strong, they boil over towards the priests, and the monks especially. He actually grins convulsively when he sees a *collet*,* and he can scarcely keep his hands off a cowl. He often says, were these tribes only to oppress and frighten the people, he should be the last person to complain, but their deceiving them and fattening upon them, and above all their sometimes flattering, cajoling, and comforting them is more than he can at all bear.”—“It is needless to observe,” the Marquess added, “that there is little love lost between the parties. He is consi-

* Priest’s stock.

dered as an emissary of Satan, if not the Devil himself, by all our priests and friars. The Abbé crosses himself when he passes, as if an evil spirit were by, and has been heard to mutter—‘Avaunt! thou incarnation of the Evil One.’”

It turned out from the old steward’s remark, who had known him longer than any one, that the most singular part of M. Liel’s case was the undoubted confidence which he at all times had that there was nothing singular in his tastes and his sentiments. “He believes,” said the *Sieur Gaspar*, “that every one of us agrees entirely with him; and were he convinced that we had really any love of our fellow-creatures, he would only pity and not blame us. But he is actually persuaded that we hypocritically conceal our real opinions, suppress our common feelings.”—“Well, that to me,” said *Emmeline*, “is most unaccountable.”—“Oh, *Mademoiselle*,” said *Gaspar*, “if you will try him upon the subject, I’ll assure you he is not without resources. He has a good deal more than you may suppose to urge in favour of his doctrine. He dwells upon the crimes committed by men against their fellow-creatures; he dilates much upon the faults of oppressive governments; he goes over the wicked laws that have been

made in most countries ; above all, he is boundless in his lectures upon the love of war which has prevailed in every age and country ; and he finds it impossible to explain these things except by supposing that whatever we may pretend, we are all of us as great men-haters as himself."

The day that M. Liel left the Château happened to be Saturday, when, as has been said, a larger party was generally invited from Nismes than during the rest of the week. Not only Madame Leblanc and the Abbé came, but the Third Judge of the Languedoc court, whom Lord Mornton had not before seen ; but in whom he found almost as much food for his gay humour, and as curious a field for his curious observation of men, as in the ancient hater-general.

M. Velour was a man of great abilities, much practical knowledge, and long experience in his profession, but of little good sense or judgment ; of a temper somewhat impatient, and inflated with an extraordinary conceit of himself, of his own opinion, and his own power, though far from underrating others, except when their sentiments came in conflict with his own. He gave, generally speaking, great satisfaction as a judge, only that he was rather more

eager to dispatch his business than to take the pains required for its accurate performance; and he was not popular with the Bar, towards whom he showed little of the courtesy that distinguished the judicial demeanour of both his colleagues, M. Chapeley and M. Balaye. He was also apt to take great likings for some practitioners, and to restore the balance by conceiving as strong dislike against others. But the peculiar characteristic of M. Velour was his little personal vanity, which made a very able and strictly honourable man really somewhat ridiculous. He affected the manners and habits of the Court, not the court of law at Nismes, but of the Governor's at Toulouse, and the King's at Versailles. He would be known among the *muscadins* for his elegant manners: he would ride a horse of great beauty and high action, though trained so as to be quite safe for a man of his very nervous nature—a bodily infirmity which he joined to the most dauntless spirit. He would frequent the assembly and the ball-room, avoiding however the dance, for which the extreme rigour of his limbs was little suited; but playing the fashionable games of the day with the fashionable women, who smiled in his presence, receiving his money, and smiled more when he was not by, re-

counting his little absurdities. To make the acquaintance of a noble or otherwise distinguished person he would go a good way ; but the distinction must be of a purely secular or civil cast, rank, or fashion, or office—for of literary merit he took no account ; his reading was confined to a small portion of the last newspaper, his learning to the humble, and more practical parts of his profession. He valued himself much on his *savoir vivre*, took great and just credit for the excellence of his entertainments, and gloried in receiving at his house, though unmarried, the greatest ladies of Nismes and its neighbourhood. To such a person the entrée of the Château was invaluable, and the Marquess frequently invited him from recollecting his intimacy with the family in his father's time, when he had been their successful advocate, while at the bar, in a great lawsuit, though they had once suffered severely by following his obstinate and over-sanguine opinion. This was his constant error : he never would hear of a doubt or a difficulty in any case ; and often made his clients persist to their undoing, when by compromise they might have been saved ; but this compromise assumed that there was a possibility of the opinion he had given being overruled by the court, and that

possibility was a thing which he never in his whole life could bring himself even to contemplate, and which no amount of experience could ever drive into his mind.

The Marquess had prepared Lord Mornton for meeting this somewhat singular person, by giving some such account as the foregoing, adding, however, that Madame de Bagnolles did not share at all in his esteem for the judge, because, among other less blameable fopperies, he chose to think the irreligious fashion of the day a becoming finery, and looked down upon churchmen and sectaries with sovereign contempt, as persons of low understanding as well as plebeian habits. The Marquess added that, even after hearing his description, M. Velour would probably still surprise, if he did not amuse him, with his little peculiarities, of which it was not easy by any description to give a true picture.

It happened as the Marquess had said. The Earl found him a very strange compound of acuteness and folly; of the most silvery or silky speech, with occasional heat and obstinacy; of general ignorance with professional readiness; of entire self-sufficiency with overdone courtesy to others; of small personal fopperies, wrought upon a ground of high official

station; in a word, a strange kind of mule or hybrid, between a pleader and a petit-maître, with what would have seemed also a cross of the actual mule itself, could that persevering animal have been permitted to continue its kind.

The first thing that struck Lord Mornton in this new acquaintance was his precise air, each thread of his dress and coiffure, as each particle of his person, being adjusted with the most rigid attention to strict form, and arranged in the most accurate order. Then his face was clothed in smiles, and his gait was precision itself as if he moved to regular time like a puppet to music. His language next claimed attention; it no way derogated from the precision of his formal gait, and its tone was of silver or of silk, so much so that the Earl could at once comprehend the Chevalier Deverell's jocose remark, that if he had been called *Soie** instead of *Velour*,† the name would have better indicated the thing, as he somewhat disrespectfully termed him. Ernest, however, who had one day been set down by the bursting loose of a sudden decision, said, "Sir, you forget the *patte* which he has."‡ The Earl

* Silk.

† Velvet.

‡ *Patte de Velour*, a velvet paw, is by the French used to

soon observed that he was more liberal in giving out his decisions than lavish of his reasons ; it seemed his rule never to give up a point or give out an argument. All you could drive him to by pressing him with reasons was the louder and more authoritative iteration of his disputed position, prefaced with a firm “no ! no !” slowly uttered and calmly, being his only answer to your argumentation ; and when he had for the second or peradventure for a third time dealt forth his dictum, he rested quite satisfied, and was clothed in a placid smile that indicated a pleasing confidence in having defeated all his antagonists and driven them from the field.

The conversation before dinner began with Ernest giving some account of a bull-fight which he had been to see in the Roman amphitheatre of Nismes, a singular and interesting sight, which recalls forcibly the ancient days of the place, and the practices of the ancient and barbarous Roman people, who delighted to meet in thousands and see their fellow-creatures destroyed by wild beasts or by one another, and even to condemn their gladiators to death by their signals as a part of the day’s sport. A softer theme and a describe one who, being generally soft (*doucereux*) can on occasion give a squeeze, or a scratch like a cat.

more modern pleased M. Velour ; he drew the conversation to Madame Pignerol's fine assembly of the evening before, which Madame Leblanc lavishly commended for the supper, the very best and most profuse she ever remembered to have seen. "I care less for that," said M. Velour, "though I grant it was elegant and choice ; but the company was perfect. I do not imagine I ever saw a finer assemblage, more people of the first rank and title." "Why, yes," said the woman of all-comprehensive charity, "and even the Bishop among them ; though, considering what women were there, one did wonder he should come." "As how, Madam ?" said the Abbé, "as how ? Why should not the right reverend the Bishop of this diocese have access to the very first persons within its bounds ?" "Oh, father," said the charitable, "I meant not in respect of rank, but of reputation, which was so very deficient that I thought his lordship had no great business there. I positively looked about me among all I could see, and could hardly descry a rag of character to cover those present. There was Madame"—"I pray you," said M. Velour, "spare us any catalogue—I for one have no kind of wish to hear the enumeration. The women whom I saw were all of the first fashion and

figure. The assembly was most brilliant." "Not the less," spake the reverend father, "not the less is Madame Leblanc well warranted in bearing her testimony, should she be so minded, against the wickedness of a degenerate age, and so earning the praise of the saints. Yet, sister, suffer me to say, the right reverend prelate might be well advised in going there, seeing he might in truth have the view of sowing the good seed, and turning many unto righteousness, there being by your account not a few there who had need of being plucked from the fire." "Doubtless, sir," said M. Velour, with an ineffable contempt on his features, which made him wholly disdain to use any such word as *father*, "doubtless, sir, the Bishop must have had some of the views you mention in honouring us with his presence; for I played two rubbers of whist with his Excellency, and each had as partner one of the ladies most talked of by that charitable portion of the community to which belongs Madame Leblanc." There was a difficulty in replying to this, which drove the Abbé from the subject, and also from the part of the room occupied by the Judge. Nor did much more general conversation take place before dinner; which in so large a party could give rise to but little talk.

Ernest was somewhat amused with hearing the Judge refer to his horsemanship, and recording the qualities of his animal as "a highly impetuous horse." "Does he," said the Parisian, "get well over the ground? for I should have doubted it from what I saw on Thursday afternoon." "Oh!" said the equestrian, with a smile of unspeakable contempt for his questioner, and satisfaction with himself and his beast, "you are quite wrong to doubt it. He is a horse of the finest and the highest action." "Possibly," said the wicked wag, "possibly, and useful of pace, unless one were minded to travel over the ground for any particular purpose."—"Oh! I don't understand what you mean. I repeat that his action is high."—"And I don't deny it. I only observed t'other day that though he lifted high his feet, they seemed to fall nearly on the ground they had before stood upon. He seemed like an old troop horse trained to mark time, and only seemed to march while he advanced not." "Like rider, like horse," whispered the Chevalier to Lord Mornton; "you 'll find that is exactly the Judge's own way of covering the ground in any discussion."

But little respectful as he was to others, and only

tolerant of the Parisian because of his fashionable habits and reputation, towards the poor Abbé, a man of no fashion and also of a religious profession, he showed no forbearance at all. With others, it is true, he reasoned not, explained not, only descanted and decided oracularly. Towards the Abbé he barely took the trouble of pronouncing more than a shrill or an authoritative "yes," unless once, when he wanted to put him down, to drive him out of the conversation, better shared, he deemed, by persons of distinction. The father had thought it right to say how much pleased he was with a late decision of the court in the Church's favour, which, he added, "was only justice, and must needs be right."—"Why, sir, you 'll allow me to doubt if gentlemen of your cloth are very well qualified to say whether a decree is right or not."—"Truly," said the champion of the Church, "I perceive me not the reason wherefore we should be excluded from having an opinion touching matters of grave interest to our Holy Establishment, which God and all the Saints long preserve!" "Sir, I meant not to enter into an argument with you or any such person; only, I repeat that I can see no reason to think you can have any

understanding of the case you allude to, and you, perhaps, might do well to confine yourself to the communion of the Saints you speak of."—A look of horror was here darted from the venerable man to the charitable woman across the table ; but she was then wrestling with the leg of a pheasant, whereupon he, having first devoutly said something inwardly, as the motion of his mouth and his upturned eyes testified, suddenly sought consolation in a fragment of *Paté de Toulouse*, on which his eyes dropped down, and of which his mouth became possessed one second of time thereafter.

In the evening, it was observed that M. Velour seemed restless and uneasy until his favourite occupation of cards could be commenced. He forgot that in the Huguenot Château such indulgences were forbidden ; and was heard to mutter certain not very pious ejaculations, which fortunately reached not the Marquess's ears. Nor did he hear another reflection which was drawn from him by some one saying he had met M. de Pignerol going to mass. "To mass !" he muttered, "I thought they had given over that superstition." When the Chevalier, who, as a good Protestant, bore a due aversion towards the Romish ritual, rather joined in this, saying

“he feared he should not, but he hoped to see the day when there would be an end of it, and the reformed ceremonies alone be used.” “Oh, for that matter,” said the most impartial Judge, “I do assure you, I have an equal respect for both.”

Lord Mornton was desirous of having his opinion upon the present aspect of public affairs, and led the conversation towards the subject which then occupied all men, the approaching assembly of the States General. But the worthy Judge gave him little encouragement. “I expect,” said the Earl, “that a strong effort will be made by the Court, and backed by the privileged orders, to keep their sittings apart, in three, or at least in two separate chambers. On this the safety of the monarchy depends.” “I regard it as wholly immaterial how they sit,” said the Judge. “The weight of property and rank must carry all before it.” “But, sir,” the Earl replied, “how can we be sure of that, when there are to be so many more of the Third Estate than of either the Clergy or the Noblesse, so that a few of these joining the Commons must carry the day?” “No!” said M. Velour, “I hold that rank and property must carry it.” “But the question is of numbers, not of weight,” rejoined the Earl. “No!” reiterated the

inflexible Judge, "I hold that it depends, and must depend, on rank and property." "Do you mean," replied his lordship, "that the influence of the privileged sitting among the unprivileged class of deputies will gain over their numbers?"—"I enter not into details; but I hold," said the immoveable, "that rank and property will prevail, as they always must."—"In the long run, if you will," the Earl observed; "but unhappily the mischief will be done before that period can arrive, and then the influence of rank and property will come too late to save us."—"No!" decided the oracular individual, "they will save always, and inevitably must save. This I hold as quite clear."

Here the case seemed truly desperate to Lord Mornton, and he was fain to be silent with an adversary as peremptory as he was unreasoning. *He*, on the other hand, seemed radiant with glory, looked as if conscious of supreme power, and bore himself as if he were understood by all present to have completely silenced, as in truth he had done, the English statesman. When he walked, or rather strutted away, triumphant, to another part of the salon, the Chevalier, who held him in almost as much contempt as the Judge shewed to all other

men, observed to the Marquess, that it was well for some folks there was no Court of Appeal in society. "Why," asked the Earl, "is he always as peremptory and always as sparing of his reasons and as liberal in his decisions?"—"Yes," the Marquess said, "it is the same on the Bench; and though his extraordinary industry and his power of giving undivided attention to all that comes before him, with his long practical experience in our courts, prevent him from often falling into errors, yet the Appeal Court is frequently applied to; much more frequently than successfully by those against whom he decides. For it is one evil consequence of his method, his dogmatism without argument, that often when he has decided rightly, parties are dissatisfied, and appeal with little or no chance of being the gainers; whereas the other judges, M. Chapeley and M. Balaye, carefully explaining their views, and assigning the grounds of their judgments, prevent many an appeal from dissatisfied suitors which the unreasoning, unbending Velour gives rise to when he has decided drily and sententiously the self-same questions."

The Marquess mentioned as a curious instance of M. Velour's vanity, and attention to the concerns

of fashionable life, that when he was raised to the bench, and considered it incumbent on him to keep a certain state and style, and gratify his sovereign desire of shining in polished circles, he made very minute and anxious inquiries into the details of the housekeeping (*ménage*) at Bagnolles. He consulted the Sieur Gaspar confidentially as to the pecuniary expense of certain things; the old steward had sense enough of the ridiculous to relish this, and handed him over for other information to the upper servants and the housekeeper. These he elaborately interrogated in all the details of their several departments. "And what has been the result of all these preliminary proceedings?" asked the Earl. "Oh, on the whole successful," was the reply. "His house is extremely well got up (*montée*), and his entertainments are good, always making allowance for their somewhat overdone appearance, and for the numberless cox-combries which the wags of the bar never fail to note, while they consume his cheer, and the ladies of 'rank and property' never silently see while they win his money."

Lord Mornton was glad to have had an opportunity of seeing one whom he considered almost as great an original as M. Liel, though very far from

being as entertaining ; and the Judge left the Château, satisfied that he had made a deep impression upon the English noble as a man of profound wisdom, but somewhat careless whether he had or not, while he was quite sure that as a man of fashion his success had been absolutely complete.

CHAPTER VI.

A KNIGHT—A FRIAR.

A LETTER arrived from Nismes for the Marchioness, brought, as the servant said, by a man in an odd kind of garb, a servant by his employment, but rather like a Reformed clergyman by his dress and manners, and also speaking in a strange, precise, pedantic sort of style, and with a twang in his pronunciation. Being told that it was impossible his letter should be delivered to Madame de Bagnolles, as she was sick in bed, he said,—“I do pray you, good friend, be pleased to give it the master of this house, for my orders were that it be rendered to some one of the family.” The servant begged his master would see the man, whom he could not well comprehend, so the Marquess went out. When asked from whom the letter came, he said, “From my master, who is more of a friend to me, and also an instructor.” But this giving

scanty information, he was asked to name him. "His name, my friend," he replied, "is one of which any might be proud, if pride were lawful in limited creatures; he is the Chevalier Andrié Agneau." The Marquess, therefore, conjectured on what the letter must be, as this Chevalier was well known to be a man of a single idea, the observance of the Sunday, or as he termed it not very correctly, the Sabbath. Having been travelling in the South he had come to Nismes, attracted, he said, by its high reputation as a "godly city," by which he meant one in which the Reformed faith abounded.

The letter, being read by M. de Bagnolles to the company, was calculated to excite the merriment of some, but the indignation or scorn of others; for its excessive cant was mixed up with an infinite degree of spiritual pride. It was pharisaical and dictatorial throughout, proceeding upon the assumption that its writer was infallible, and that his mission was to school all other mortals, as mere erring and even sinful creatures. He said how much he felt gratified at being in so "God-fearing a town as Nismes, and communing with a truly Sabbath-keeping people;" that he had also heard much in favour of the Marchioness herself, and

hoped to have more ground for commending her, as it was his wish to be able to do, provided he might with a safe conscience; but, he said, “he felt it his bounden duty, which he must no wise be slack in performing, to warn her against the heinous sin of Sabbath-breaking, which she allowed to be committed by harbouring certain persons at her residence, who were seen to walk, and even to ride, nay actually to drive out in carriages on the Lord’s Day.”—This abomination, he said, he felt imperatively called upon to remonstrate against, and to bear his testimony for the truth, reminding the Marchioness, that Nismes was a Sabbath-observing country in the true Scriptural sense of the word; and beseeching her to reflect on the effects of the example set by her—of what he called “the overwhelming moral influence of the example of the Château.” He called the Sabbath a sign, by Divine appointment, of the righteousness which exalteth a nation, and besought her above every thing to “travail with the ungodly who abode under her roof, the stranger within her gate, to the end that each one might hallow the holy day of the Lord.” He referred her to the great covenant of water which had been administered at her baptism, whereby

she partook of the promises, and bound herself, or was bound by proxy, to keep the Sabbath holy, and he concluded with a prayer "that it may be made a sign between God and the Marchioness, whereby she may know that He is the Lord her God."

Some discussion here arose on the answer which it would be fit to give this extraordinary letter, the more extraordinary and the less called for, as the Marquess observed, because really the Sabbath was most strictly observed in their Huguenot household. And, accordingly, the silly knight had been driven to carp at the harmless act of Sunday rides and drives. The company was divided in opinion what course to take. The Chevalier at once declared for "administering the covenant of water" to his brother knight, "to the which solemnity," he said, "the horse-pond nigh to the stable afforded a providential convenience." Lord Mornton was much disposed to write an answer, which he offered to undertake. But both these courses were rejected by the Marquess as certain to offend Madame de Bagnolles, whose leaning was very likely to be even favourable to Sir André, and who at all events would never tolerate any breach of courtesy or even respect to

a man whom she regarded as entirely well-meaning, however she might possibly (and even this was not certain) consider him as mistaken. Therefore the consultation ended in their all agreeing to the suggestion of Lord Mornton, whose curiosity got the better of his love of sport, and who wished to see this Champion of the Sabbath. The Marquess accordingly invited him to the Château; and at the same time, having a presentiment of the dullness that awaited the party, he invited an Irish Friar who was passing through and had some knowledge of Lord Mornton; indeed came from the same part of the country. The Earl, however, aware of the nature of his countryman, warned the worthy host only to ask him for that day's dinner, else he might find it less difficult to dislodge the rooks from the trees than the Friar from comfortable quarters.

While the party at the Château were sitting before dinner in the library, the invited guests were announced. And first there entered the knight, to whose name all present forthwith proceeded to make the addition "*of the woeful countenance.*" The Chevalier Agneau was indeed well entitled to this honour. Of a tall figure, whose straightness much reminded the mathematician how he defined a right line, for

it was length without breadth ; of a stiffness so perfect that part of his toilette seemed to be swallowing a poker ; of a pale and worn hue, a gaunt aspect, deeply sunken eyes, locks which rivalled his figure in observing the rectilinear course—all at once confessed that, did his moral rectitude keep parallel with his physical, and were his integrity as inflexible as his spine, he might be well entitled to enthrone himself on those heights from which he delighted, as his letter showed, to look down upon others, and to thank God he was not as they are. His gait and his manner in general were much such as his figure would probably lead to—the functions were like what the structure entitled the beholder to expect ; or rather the movements to be looked for were limited to what such a mechanism was calculated to perform. The bow wherewithal he saluted the company had its origin at the lowest of the vertebræ, the centre from which the long body described a circular arc ; his face exhibited no change whatever when he either performed this evolution, as he did slowly and deliberately, or when he, with a voice neither harsh nor unkind, hoped the Marchioness was mending in health, in token of the prayers of the congregation two days ago having

been favourably heard. He sate him down near the Chevalier, who seemed somewhat discomposed, and gave the kind of look which one does upon the near approach of some unwelcome being that either walks on four legs or moves along without any legs at all. Accordingly he moved off, and met the Friar Patrick, who followed immediately after the dismal Knight, and presented a remarkable contrast to what M. Deverell regarded as the disgrace of chivalry. For he was a fair, sleek, comfortable-looking personage, with a ruddy face and complacent smile, sharp and somewhat cunning eyes, a stubble of beard, whereupon snuff remained like manure on the field, a great breadth and depth of chest, and a paunch to which the Chevalier could urge no objection, if it were not that of jealousy. He hardly had saluted the Marquess, when he ran up to Lord Mornton, and said how pleased he was to meet here “the very first and foremost man in all Ireland, and who would soon be at the top of them all in England too.” The language in which this was conveyed saved the high-bred Earl from the annoyance which he must have felt had it been understood by any but the Deverells, who were also aware of the Irish peculiarities, and that such phrases in their

mouths mean exactly nothing more than “how do you do,” or “very well, I thank you.”

The announcement of dinner gave Friar Patrick occasion to observe that it was news which seldom came amiss to him, after he had been walking about in the discharge of his duty to visit all the sick and dying in the town. The Chevalier André vehemently denied that this could be true, or even near the truth, because there were more persons in Nismes who would be horror-struck at seeing the Friar's habit before them than at the approach of death itself. “Och! and so much the worse for them,” said the father, no way put out at his summary conviction of invention on the spot. “Och! so much the worse for them! And indeed they may happen soon to be a-seeing some one they will like worse still.” “I tell you, sir,” said M. Agneau, “and I tell you very plainly, that there may be no mistake, these good souls would not like worse to see the very death you allude to, grim though it be.” “Ough,” said Patrick, “and it was not death at all, at all; I was talking of some one else that comes after him, and will may be pay off my scores with your people, who you say choose to depart in sin for fear of seeing a holy friar.” M. Agneau was beginning

to express, but in a precise, and formal, and lugubrious fashion his horror at hearing a clergyman speak so lightly of so awful an individual, when the Marquess handed Madame de Chatillon into the dining-room, and the Father soon found it wholly impossible to divide his attention, or abstract it from temporal to spiritual matters. He only muttered that there was a time for all things, according to the wise man, whose text he thought fit to expound by adding, "And why not a dinner-time as well?" His boisterous talk was accordingly little or not at all heard for the next hour or so. The Chevalier Deverell had been somewhat alarmed at the dilemma in which he found himself, of having to shun the near neighbourhood of the thing he most hated, a monk, and, what he now thought nearly as bad, the Agneau, whom he termed a lay-brother equal to any one of the regular gang. He with some difficulty effected his escape by seating himself next his son and the *Sieur Gaspar*, upon whose sympathy he could securely reckon in all that regarded either of his particular aversions. They indeed enjoyed a little snug conversation together, the expense of which was borne by the Knight and the Friar in nearly equal shares. Thus when the

Knight, after touching on the many “professing folks” who dwelt in Nismes, commending the Protestants lavishly for their “diligent attendance upon ordinances,” hinting at the serious “backslidings” of the Established Church, and yet giving the town generally a hearty blessing in the form of a prayer or devout ejaculation on it, as “a God-fearing quarter,”—when after this he took occasion to enter his protest, or, as he phrased it, take up his testimony, against what he termed “the unknown tongues,” and commended the Apostle Paul as having denounced praying in Latin, when he said who ever did so speak spoke not to men, the Friar for one instant suspended his operations to observe that the same text also said “he spoke unto God,” which, the Baron drily observed, seemed something when you were praying. M. Deverell whispered to the steward, that he did not believe any tongue was much more unknown than that of the sorrowful Knight himself, with his ordinances, his professions, his backslidings, his testimonies. The Sieur Gaspar, however, assured him that all of the same caste (or as he jocosely termed it, of the same cant) had a glimglibber of their own, and quite understood one another, like freemasons, “I suppose,” said the

Chevalier, "each understanding his brother's mummery about as clearly as his brother understands it himself."

The dinner must be admitted not to have been enlivened by the addition of the worthy Knight and reverend Father; it was not the gayest that had been known at the Château. The Countess, the only lady present, would not condescend to treat with any courtesy a personage whose whole time seemed to be occupied with mere trifles; for, though by no means deficient in religious feelings, and even leaning strongly towards the Reformed faith from her Swiss education, she yet regarded all questions of a ceremonial nature with utter contempt; and when she had attended mass, or the temple, which she did indiscriminately, she considered the rest of the Sunday her own, regarding with inexpressible contempt the strict observance of it which her kinswoman maintained at the Château, and always forming a circle of less rigid "Sabbath-keepers," in her own apartment during the evening, while the rest of the family were engaged in psalmody and prayer.

When the party met in the salon Emmeline joined them, and was curious to see a person she had

heard in the morning described by the Baron as a dismal original ; for this union of dulness with originality she could not well comprehend. However, she was doomed to find the difficulty overcome by the infinite variety of nature ; for he was a thing at once grotesque and dull, quite singular, and quite unentertaining. This Knight of the Sabbath, it appeared, had so worked up his mind to an exclusive interest in his one subject, that the fourth commandment to him was more important than all the other nine, in the habitual breach of one, at least, of which he really seemed to live ; for let him but see any person do an act not of absolute necessity on that day, and he at once bore witness against him as if he had committed the most serious of offences. But he could tolerate much from any one who filled up the seventh day with prayer, and looked gloomy and dismal, and ate nothing that required cooking, took no exercise, and barely existed. He had, however, one admirable quality for an enthusiast. He was not only perfectly sincere, but he was extremely patient of contradiction. He received with perfect calmness whatever was urged in opposition to his doctrines ; his features even relaxed into a kind of something between a grin and a smile, which was meant for the latter ;

and an air of perfect peace and quiet, something as near complacency as his visage could approach, seemed spread over it, when he either listened or replied to any objections urged against his tenets. The cause of this was very obvious. He had the most undoubting confidence in his nostrum; nothing could shake this full assurance of its absolute efficacy; it was a cure for all ills here, as well as a preservative from all evils hereafter. Hence he regarded the buffeting he occasionally was exposed to, much as a person does a storm at sea when he is looking at it from a window on shore; he eyed the combatants who roared or laughed at him, as he would so many tigers or hyænas raging or grinning through the solid bars of their cages.

The Marquess avoided all discussion with him, because he dreaded in his excellent wife's absence saying a word which might betoken any doubt or any light feeling in what she regarded almost as devoutly as the Knight, though somewhat more rationally. But the Baron could by no means suffer the evening to pass without a tilt; and he was willingly seconded by the Earl, as soon as he could disengage himself from Father Patrick's oily talk.

The company heard little of this tête-a-tête, but the closing part would have amused them had it not been veiled in an “unknown tongue,” from most of them.—“You have been as far as Italy, then, of late?” said Lord Mornton.—“That I have, sure,” said the Friar. Lord Mornton said he was going there for the winter, probably to Rome.—“Och! and do that same, my lord; you will see his Holiness.”—“Did you, when at Rome, Father?”—“And to be sure I did, and a mighty pleasant old gentleman he is, and has a very great respect for your Lordship.”—“For me, Father?” said the Earl, with much astonishment. “Aye, indeed, and for who but you?”—“Why, how can he possibly be aware of my existence?”—“Och! dear, and sure we all of us know your lordship, and are proud of you; and when I told his Holiness you were a-coming to Rome, he seemed mightily well pleased, I’ll assure you.” This was a little too gross for even one inured to the style of his countrymen, so the Earl willingly retreated upon the harder and more bearable Knight, with whom the Baron was beginning his conversation.

“Really, Chevalier,” said M. de Moulin, “I cannot help thinking you are a little severe upon our

good neighbours of Nismes, as to their Sabbath failings."

"Sir," replied the Knight, "those of whom I now spake were not the godly of Nismes, but the Romish portion of that people, whom I give myself no pain about, as not taking any heed of brands actually in the burning; though even, as touching the Reformed, so contagious is evil example and impure communication, I here last Lord's-day, attended the Temple, and on my going thither saw a Reformed family driving themselves out in a carriage yoked with mules, contrary to the very express letter of the law, which says 'thy ass.' Then, how could they after that expect a blessing of rain, for which they put up prayers?"

"Och! and as for that," said the Friar, glad to take the heretic at a disadvantage, as he thought, 'Don't let them go to trouble themselves, and bother themselves and the blessed Saints with their prayers for rain. No rain will they have.'

"I really cannot see," said the Marquess, "why the Reformed congregation's prayers are to be less efficacious than other people's."

"My dear," said the Friar, "I mean that none of them all will ever have a drop of rain

while the wind keeps in the north; and so will they not."

"Why, truly, Father," the Earl observed, "that is an odd view of the subject. Then do you believe the offering of prayer depends on the wind?"

The crafty Irishman saw his grievous error, and got suddenly out of it. "Easy there, my Lord, easy. What I mean is, that it wants a good Saint to do the trick when the mistral keeps a-blowing, and never a bit of a Saint have these heretics to help them."

The Baron wished to continue his discussion with him of the sorrowful countenance, which this bye-battle had interrupted, so he came back to the charge he had begun when the meteorological divinity of Friar Patrick had broken in upon them. "I conceive, Chevalier," said he, "that this doctrine of strict Sabbath observance is not quite borne out by the authority of Scripture."

"As how?" said the Knight mildly, and even triumphantly—"Do you speak of the Old Covenant or of the New?"

"Of the New, certainly," answered the Baron. "It is said the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

“Aye,” replied the Knight, “it is so said, and the passage contains a deep and a mysterious meaning, the very reverse of what you seem to give it.”

“However,” the Baron said, “I leave all controverted passages on one side. No mystery can lurk under the plain appeal to the Pharisees, your predecessors, in this rigour of Sabbath-keeping—that all of them would save his sheep or his asses on the Sabbath, if they fell into a pit.”

“No mystery? Indeed!” asked Sir André. “Why, can we tell with any certainty what is meant here by sheep? As for asses, you have added them.”

The Chevalier Deverell here whispered to Gaspar that it was a very natural mistake when one was conversing with the silly Knight, to think of asses. “Truly his name connects itself easily with sheep, but he never will attain the rank and station of a mad one (*mouton enragé*). A duller animal did I never yet come across.”

“Allow me,” said the Baron, “to give you my opinion at once on your Sabbath theory. I entirely approve of a due and even a strict observance of that day, that it may ever be one of rest, and no labour allowed on it. But to exclude all innocent recre-

ation, I hold really both contrary to the nature of rest, and impolitic for the purpose you have in view of enforcing a due observance of the day. For by compelling men to be absolutely still and idle, and avoid all recreation, you make it a day of penance, not of repose ; and by taking this course you render Sabbath-keeping unpopular. Recollect, I beseech you, that our humbler fellow-citizens have no other day wherein to amuse themselves. You have the whole six, and can easily submit to pass the seventh in dullness, which after all you perhaps don't dislike. They have no other day of relaxation, and they are exceedingly averse to such dismal observances as you may delight in."

The Knight continued as placid and as grim as before ; but instead of meeting the Baron's powerful and practical reasoning, he drew himself up, and involved himself in a cloud of vague generalities, clothed in language of a mysterious and spiritual kind, wherein were chiefly heard the words duty God-ward, professing Christians, godly and God-fearing, strong testimony, covenant, signs, sanctification. The discussion was thus darkened as by the coming on of night ; and disputants all were wrapt in the sable gloom, and like the animals, the cattle and

painted birds, stretched their weary limbs, smoothed their cares, and soothed their hearts oblivious of the labours of the day. The dismal personage rose slowly to depart; his woeful countenance no longer shed a gloom over the library; his temporary comrade, the Friar, followed to share his heretical but convenient vehicle; and they quitted the hospitable Château, leaving their characters a legacy to the Chevalier, the Baron, and the Countess, who proceeded forthwith to "do what they pleased with their own." Only Emmeline made any defence for the departed Knight. His perfect honesty and singleness of heart, his enthusiasm, however extravagant and unreflecting, yet perfectly sincere, and connecting itself with sacred subjects, his entire freedom from all gall, and his even gentle demeanour, in her eyes redeemed his unquestionable dulness; and she was ever ready to take a very small portion of the wisdom that is from above, in compensation of any lack of that in which the children of this world so far excel the children of light. For the Friar she had nothing at all to say. She was disgusted with his vulgar forwardness, and nauseated his low, indiscriminate flattery. But above all his plain carelessness about truth was offensive to her, and was not at all

redeemed by the constitutional good-humour, the gaiety of the body, as much as of the mind, which he possessed, or which possessed him, allied as it was on the one hand to some wit and drollery, on the other to no little sensual indulgence.

CHAPTER VII.

LEAVING THE CHÂTEAU.

THE illness of the Marchioness had gradually become manageable under the skilful advice of an eminent practitioner from Montpellier, who came several times to Bagnolles, and appeared to stand less in awe of remedies and have more dread of diseases than his learned brother of Nismes had shown in young M. Deverell's case. Madame de Bagnolles was at length restored to the society of her family and guests; she gave the merit of her recovery entirely to a higher power than the physician, whom she only regarded as an instrument; and she marked her restoration to health by not only returning thanks in the congregation of M. Gardain, but distributing her charity among the poor cottagers near the Château, who regarded her as a mother, and among the poor of the worthy pastor's flock. Not confining her benevolence, however, to

the members of her own sect, she visited the noble hospital of Nismes, and left a sum with the kind-hearted and hard-labouring sisters of charity (*sœurs de charite*) under whose care its several departments are so admirably administered, that the Montpellier physician said he knew of no laboratory more accurately and even learnedly conducted than that of Sister Agatha and her two helpmates in this establishment. The vows of these sisters are only for twelve months, but such are the pleasures of charity combined with industry and not deprived of rational liberty, that it is rare to see those vows not renewed from year to year.

The Marchioness's health having been the cause, possibly in part the pretext, of the guests prolonging their visit, symptoms now appeared of the party which had lasted so long and proved so agreeable at length breaking up. The Chevalier and his son went first, to the no small relief of the Countess, who, however, by her frequent allusions to Ernest, her curiosity about his habits, and especially her minute enquiries into his female intimacies and attachments, evinced a continuation of the extreme uneasiness which she had already shewn the Baron he had given her, though in what way he never could dis-

cover, fearing to ask any questions or take any other means of inquiry with one so suspicious and so acute. Her restlessness on this subject was such, that not only the Baron, who watched each word and each look of his idol, but her careless husband, could not help perceiving it. "Why, Catherine," he one day said, while they were all conversing in the portico after breakfast, "what can it signify how his affair with the German Baroness ended? Is not it enough that now he is devoted to a French Countess?"—"I really, Chatillon," said she, contemptuously enough, "don't know who you allude to."—"I am sorry you don't, my love," he answered. "But I dare to say he never troubles his head about the Chevalier de Morne (her first husband). Then why should you care about the Baroness?"—"The Chevalier was a man, Chatillon, whom you would do well to imitate; such a man as few indeed are like."—"Oh, dear, I have the highest respect for him," said his successor; "I am sure no one has more reason to lament his loss than myself."—"Why, you did not know him,"—said she sharply, to the infinite amusement of the company, and especially Lord Mornton, who saw that with all her quickness she could be so seriously intent on her subject that

a joke escaped her. However, with her usual tact, and her relish of a harmless pleasantry, she took it in good part, and was restored to good humour.

The conversation then turned upon the morning's news as usual, and all gave great praise to M. Neck-er's first measures, by which he applied the balances in the different revenue departments to the immediate service of the treasury, and retracing the Archbishop's fatal steps, ordered all the claims on it to be liquidated without delay. "Here," said Lord Mornton, "in the management and control of the finances, he is quite at home. Heaven grant that in the more important and far more arduous parts of his office, the management, and above all the control, of the people, he may show equal vigour. My fears point to his fears, his dread of popular odium—his fondness for glory, as no doubt he calls his ruling propensity—his vain love of mob-applause, as I term it—and his unwillingness to expose himself to the storm in order to save the ship committed to his care."—"I would fain hope," the Baron said, "that he will not be without powerful allies. I speak not of the Court, which seems to be utterly devoid of firmness and of wisdom, to have no resources in itself, and to be the sport of each wind that blows. But I look, I own,

to the body of the privileged orders, the noblesse and the clergy. Surely they will join him in stemming the popular torrent if it sets in so strongly as you apprehend, and as, from present indications, I myself believe it will."

"My dear Baron," said the Earl, "if the French clergy and the French noblesse resembled our English church and peerage, I should have no fears at all. But these are the same names for things entirely different. You nobles are a body almost like our commoners, of perhaps a hundred thousand, who have the privileges and rank, but of whom not above two hundred families are really of the old true nobility, respected as such, and as such enjoying their privileges without any one grudging them. Why, not much above that number have even the right of going to Court, by tracing their descent back to the year 1400, yet all of them insult the people by their exemptions and their titles, and are hated accordingly, while they themselves hate those real patricians who are above them. As for the clergy, it is nearly the same thing. The parish priest, the curé, works hard and lives hard upon a small pittance, while the emoluments of the church are engrossed by the prelates, and

canons, and abbots, and are the provision of the noble families. Hence you will find the inferior clergy much more likely to side with the people, from whose body they are taken, than with the Court. In England, I need hardly tell you, all this is quite the reverse; the nobility, few in number, are possessed of large wealth, much influence, direct power both judicial and legislative; the clergy are of all ranks indiscriminately, and those who work are paid; thus the throne has a barrier which no tempest is likely ever to break through."

The Marquess observed that he took the same gloomy view of the question with Lord Mornton, and he added that many persons of good judgment believed the privileged orders would shew more jealousy of the Crown by a great deal than the commoners, nay, that the discontented, intriguing, and turbulent portions of those privileged orders, the inferior nobility and clergy, were very likely to join the violent faction of the Tiers Etat, and carry the more moderate and innocent along with them to desperate extremities.

A question being started as to the mode in which the election of the deputies would be carried on, Lord Mornton professed to think it signified ex-

ceedingly little in whom the right of voting was vested on this occasion. Whatever class of the people chose, they would probably pitch upon the same persons, the men of forward manners, active habits, little solid merit, and no modesty—lawyers like M. Catteau; perhaps many of those literary men whose publications the Archbishop had advertised for. The only important point, in his lordship's view, was the sitting together or apart. If the whole body were to be melted into one mass, he regarded the monarchy of France as doomed to inevitable and to speedy destruction; and considered the desiring of the States to meet in one chamber as not a Union of States, but a Revolution. He added,—“And if it be true, as the Baron believes, that M. Necker has determined to give the Commons a number of representatives equal to the two other orders combined, then of course he means that all should unite in one mass to overthrow the monarchy; and, however little he may intend it, or desire it, I shall then regard M. Necker as the author of this Revolution.”

“How hard a measure you deal out of responsibility!” said the Countess; “You almost make a minister answerable for events.”—“Certainly, I do,” said the firm-minded Earl, upon whom no petty con-

sideration could have any sway in a matter of grave public concernment; "Certainly I do, whenever I can fairly connect the event with the minister's conduct. Nay, it is a safe rule to attach responsibility to office, and not to be very nice in looking for the connexion between that conduct and the event." "Why, really," she answered "you remind me of the King of Prussia, who, seeing the soldiers' hats blow off, as they said owing to the wind, flogged the first man whose hat went."—"The wise King of Prussia!" said the Earl; "And you will please to remember the result; the wind blew much as before in that bleak, open, uninhabitable country, but, some how or other, no more hats blew off. Don't, however, suppose me harsh towards M. Necker, whom all esteem and many admire. I should deal out the same measure of justice to one I love as a brother, I mean Mr. Pitt."—"What course do you expect he would hold in difficulties such as now beset our government?"—"Who can say? Hitherto he has only been tried as a financier and a debater, and in both capacities he has proved of first-rate power. I should expect—we never can be sure of the future, even in men best known to us—but I should expect a firm and unflinching hand would in such perils be

found to guide us. My position, however, is quite general. I look to the minister as responsible. He volunteers to take the helm, and he is bound to bring both courage and skill to the task."

The approaching separation was a most cruel blow upon both the Baron and the Countess, who now passed their whole time together either in walking or conversing under the portico, or reading in the library. Though he stood in awe of her imperious disposition and irritable temper, the only things of which he had ever known what it was to stand in awe, yet the charms of her conversation, and above all his devoted attachment, which she fully returned, made her society a necessary part of his existence ; nor could he well see how he was to pass his days, and above all his long evenings, without it. She, on the other hand, deeply felt the approaching change ; for all the interest she once felt in life seemed on the point of being destroyed. She could no longer take an interest in politics without having him recalled to her recollection, him in whose society all her political discussions had so long been carried on, and in concert with whom all her little plans had been devised. She had, unhappily, no family to occupy her thoughts ; he was become the

sovereign care of her mind; and losing him, or separated from him, she seemed to lose all. His letters, indeed, afforded her the prospect of some resource, far more than hers offered to him; he plainly avowed that he should reckon that but a poor substitute for the delights he had enjoyed in her presence. His vows to return and meet her next year, when the Bagnolles expected a re-assembling of the same delightful party, were what she mainly relied on. But both he and she were fain to confess that a comfort delayed for twelve months, or it might be more, helped little to make those months pass swiftly away; and neither could be blind to the lowering aspect of public affairs which made all plans uncertain that were to be executed at so considerable a distance of time.

In this state of reluctance to part, day after day were allowed to pass away, and at length the Count, who was obliged to be in Paris by a certain time, fixed the hour of departure at a week's distance. This week was passed by him in constant conversation with Albert, whom he in vain besought to let him make an attempt at bringing away Louise. Albert saw the difficulty of obtaining her consent after what had happened last year; he also had

awakened to what never then sufficiently occupied him, eager in the pursuit and looking neither to the right nor to the left, but fixing his eyes only on the object before him, the extreme difficulty first of his escaping with her into Switzerland, and next of his supporting her there in anything like the ease and comfort she had all her life been accustomed to enjoy. This consideration, indeed, tended exceedingly to console him for the cruel disappointment he had suffered, and softened the bitterness of a separation made doubly vexatious by the exquisite delights of the momentary meeting with her in the Contât. He resisted, therefore, all Chatillon's generous proposals of chivalrous devotion; and was resolved to continue in his present concealment until the changes now apparently inevitable should restore him to liberty, never doubting that whatever kind of constitution might arise out of the present crisis, it must be one which should relieve both Louise from thralldom and himself from alarm.

Chatillon had never communicated to the Countess the particulars of Albert's history, further than informing her that he was a convert from the Catholic religion, in which he had at one time

taken orders, and that he was under persecution for a supposed offence also against the civil power. Her growing attachment for the Baron had, indeed, abated her curiosity on this as on all other subjects; and she did not trouble him to disclose what he seemed unwilling to tell. But her interest was not so lukewarm in the affairs of the Baron; and as he had often promised to unfold a mystery which he told her hung over his history, before they parted he gave her some outline of his life. The narrative fixed her entire attention; for, independent of the degree in which she felt interested about all that concerned him, the vicissitudes he had gone through, the extraordinary adventures he had engaged in, the strange scenes he had witnessed, gave the liveliest dramatic effect to his story, and at the same time displayed his character in its most striking points. His fiery temper; his indomitable passions; the depth and endurance of his revenge; his incapacity to forget either kindness or injury, though capable of forgiving the one, and overlooking the other; his pride bordering upon disease, and ever at war with his interest; his dark retirement within himself, unsocial and unapproachable; all were displayed at each successive stage of his life in colours which it

required his own eloquence to use with their due effect. The picture interested her ; she, less than any other, was shocked with its harsher features ; she, less than any other, was repulsed by the parts which were shaded with guilt ; but there was one redeeming tint thrown over the whole ; one hue of aerial perspective which deadened the effect of the fiercer lights, and threw a gleam into the more sombre shades, a hue which was spread over all the canvas ; it was his tender devotion to Emmeline ; to her father first, afterwards to herself. This affection, the engrossing sentiment of his heart, was second nature, was the quality which redeemed all his errors, and mitigated a character otherwise unrelenting and harsh. The Countess, less disposed than almost any other woman to be touched with this, and who in any person but himself might possibly have disregarded it, felt its enchantment when she found it belonged to him who had made so deep an impression upon her heart.

But if there was much to strike, there was not a little to astonish in the facts which his history brought to her knowledge. She now found, to her amazement, that he was not originally a Fleming, though in Flanders he had long resided, and held dis-

tinguished places under the government. He came from the Venaissin, and had lately returned thither after a long absence, having left it with a brother when very young, in consequence of some domestic difference aggravated by his impetuous temper, and from his daring, adventurous disposition made the ground of quitting his family. "I tenderly loved my mother," he said, after going over the chief part of his story, "but with my father, who was harsh and severe, I, who had as much pride as himself, was on less friendly terms. It became impossible for me now to avow in Flanders that I was French; all connexion with France was, therefore, of necessity to cease; it seemed better not to do things by halves; and I, therefore, suffered my family to suppose us both dead, myself and my brother whose fortunes I raised with my own. This has been to me the source of most bitter self-upbraiding. I sacrificed to worldly ambition, and a silly pride towards my father, the tenderest affections of my heart towards my other parent. As happens in such cases, the resolution was constantly taken to return, when I became prosperous," and must have been welcomed back with open arms even by my father; but my official position interposed great obstacles,

and its duties gave me unceasing occupation. I delayed from year to year doing that which ought never to have been put off at all; and I was roused from this inaction by my mother's death, which left me comparatively little inducement to make the exertion and return to Avignon. It was to see my father that I went there last summer, and I found him in a state of mind that made him wholly unable to recognize me, and to recollect that he ever had a son. He had been nearly in that hopeless condition ever since the loss of Madame Lunel."—"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the Countess. "Lunel? and is that your family name?"—"My dearest friend, it is, but I cannot comprehend why it should make such an impression upon you."—"Had you a brother much younger than the one you took away with you?"

"Certainly, but I barely can remember him. He was only five years old when we left the country." "Then be assured," she said, "that there are in this house those who can tell you more things of that brother than you have any guess of. Have you never heard at Nismes of a friar who seven or eight years ago got into a dreadful scrape in Avignon; a Benedictine Friar?"—"Assuredly

I have, but what of that? What can my brother have had to do with Friar Isidore, or Friar Dominique, which were the names of the two monks that fled?"—"Of course you can tell me your brother's Christian name (*nom de baptême*)? You know he would take another upon his profession, if he ever became a monk."—"My dear friend, you alarm and agitate me beyond bearing. What! Gracious God! Was he, could he be Father Isidore? His name was Albert."—"Then, dearest, be not agitated more. Albert certainly is not Isidore, but he as certainly is Dominique, and—" "Oh! Heavenly Father!" he exclaimed wildly, "Am I reserved for this? A brother of mine a fugitive, wandering about with a price set on his head, with the stigma of apostacy tainting his name, with the mark of Cain blackening his brow!"—She recoiled from the scene of wounded pride, of suffering affection, of outraged honour, which her disclosure had raised before her eyes; she never yet had seen him moved, never seen his ferocious passions—his feelings acute to an extreme degree—roused and maddened. She was alarmed at the spectacle which presented itself. She felt as if she had caused the havoc she saw. She grew nervous, then hysterical, and sunk on the sofa,

where her agitation found relief in a flood of tears, and this recalled her friend to some command of himself. He became tenderly moved to see her strong feeling for him, and as soon as she recovered her self-possession she insisted upon his letting her communicate what had passed to the Count. "I only know the outlines of this sad history," she said. "He is acquainted with it all, and it will pour oil into your wounds if you learn from him, as I am sure you must, that Albert is more sinned against than sinning, and that the honour of your family is at all events preserved without a stain."

At first he hardly knew how to adopt this suggestion, kindly meant as he saw it was, and upon the whole, by far the best course that could be pointed out, as a little reflection showed it to be. His pride, his stubborn pride, raised obstacles to any communication on such a subject with any man. However, the entreaty of his dear friend, and the perfect confidence which he had in both the honour and the amiable nature of Chatillon, overcame all scruples; and in a few hours, he returned from his ride, when she met him on the terrace, and apprised him shortly of the extraordinary discovery she had made. It was agreed that he should take

a walk with the Baron before dinner, and disclose the heads of Albert's history, without letting him know where he was. This accordingly was done ; and the full statement of the whole transaction removed, in a very satisfactory way, all the impressions which the exaggerated and perverted reports in circulation had left on his mind. "I am far," said the Count, "from holding Albert guiltless, as he is far from acquitting himself of blame, and even of great blame. But, poor man, how severely has he suffered ! Is not his penance complete to expiate his offence ?"—"My dear Count," said the haughty Baron, "I feel far otherwise ; and I am somewhat vexed that a brother of mine should feel as much compunction as you think he does. I go by his intention. He was desperately in love with Mdlle. Orange ; the villain who had always maltreated him was in fact occupied in seducing her ; Albert found him, as he thought, in her presence, and even, as he believed, in amorous dalliance with her ; she singing his cursed madrigals, he accompanying her on his vile lute, she tenderly bidding him adieu ; he, gracious heavens, actually imprinting a kiss upon her lips ! Why, who could stand this ? Who that had not been frozen to stone in a convent, where never-

theless lechers seemed to be hatched or finished, could hear and all but see this, and his blood not boil and boil over? No, no, Count, neither you nor I could so far forget ourselves; and had we been in his place, we should have made the same rush that he did on Ambrose, for on Ambrose he never doubted but he was springing.”—“Well, Baron, I will not argue the matter further; only, if he intended to slay Ambrose—which I am far from saying he did, rather believing that he knew not what he intended or what he was about—but if he had so designed I should have held the guilt of blood to be on his head, though I admit with some considerable palliation. Of this I am certain, that his years have since been spent in repenting it.”—“Aye, aye; he had the severe misfortune of killing his friend, and had he done so by the chance firing of a fowling-piece, or, to take a liker case, by letting off a pistol at a robber, and the ball rebounding from the wall on his friend, he would have suffered severely, like every man of good dispositions. But anything like blood-guiltiness I utterly deny he lies under.”—Upon the subject of his apostacy, however, the Baron was more harsh in his judgment. Not that he was himself at all overburthened with religion; but he

worshipped, so he phrased it, "the Gods of the country, as all wise men had done in all ages;" and he felt as if his family was somewhat lowered by one of its members leaving the national faith.

Finding the Baron so much relieved regarding the main point, as Chatillon considered it, he, in answer to the question now put, of where Albert had gone after he left Switzerland, shortly mentioned his wanderings in America, and his return to France, and then ventured to tell the Baron that his brother was actually under the same roof. This produced a violent effect upon him; he was choked by his feelings; he feared to shew them, and quickly left the Count in the pavilion to which they now had come, and hastening to his own apartment, where he met Emmeline, he fell on her neck and found relief in a convulsive fit of tears. She was alarmed at so unusual an occurrence, but he put off answering her inquiries, being always very careful to avoid whatever could excite her feelings or throw her into any agitation, as her health required the greatest management in this respect.

Her soothing attention and sweet conversation, so often resorted to by him to calm his troubled spirit, so certain ever to have this effect, now as always

restored him to the entire possession of himself. He remained when she left him, pensive, occupied with what he had heard, revolving all his past life in his mind, looking forward to his future lot, but chiefly planning, not without lively interest, his brother's escape, and looking forward with an interest as lively to the interview he should have with him early on the morrow, if he could not persuade the Count to break the subject in an interview with Albert the same evening, so that the meeting might afterwards take place before night.

Lord Mornton quitted the Château to proceed on his journey towards Italy, delighted with his visit, and leaving all who had become acquainted with him equally charmed. Prince Caramelli, too, took his departure ; and there remained only the Baron and his niece with the Chatillons. It became thus more difficult for the Count to have with Albert the explanation so much desired by his brother, and necessary before their meeting could take place. It was not therefore till next morning that this could be accomplished; and the Baron, who seldom knew what it was to pass a night blessed with sleep, was agitated, until he got up, with the most various and conflicting emotions. At length Chatillon found an

opportunity of visiting the Solitary ; and he easily brought him upon the subject of his family and their early history. He found that Albert retained but a slight impression of his elder brother's features, but remembered the great affection which he had ever shown towards him, and the kind of agony with which he came to embrace him when he went from his father's house. This led to the Count asking if it was quite sure Francis had ceased to exist. There was not any doubt, he replied, that Louis died many years ago, for a letter written in his last illness had been received ; but nothing whatever having been heard of Francis, it was concluded that he too had died. Chatillon then said that he had every reason to believe this supposition was groundless, and that Francis had prospered in the world, but was settled in a foreign country, and lived under a different name. By degrees he broke the whole subject, and astonished Albert with the intelligence that his long-lost brother was now under the roof of the Château. The agitation into which this discovery threw him was quickly succeeded by another ; his dread of his brother's impetuous, proud temper, so well known in the Lunel family, and the apprehension that his history would

excite hostile feelings towards him. But Chatillon easily quieted all such alarms, by apprising him of the whole having been already communicated, and of the favourable, indeed the far too favourable, reception which it had met with from the Baron.

Nothing now remained, therefore, but to bring the two brothers together ; and this was easily managed as soon as the family went out to take the usual morning drive in the Forest. The scene was touching ; for they met with the same affection with which they recollected that they had parted, but the melancholy reflection upon their mother's death, indeed on Louis's fate also, embittered a meeting which else had been grateful to all their feelings. Those two afflictions, and especially the loss of their mother, went to their heart ; for both felt how cruel it was that she should not have been allowed to witness their meeting, that her eldest child should have been so long lost to her, and that her youngest and favourite son should not have been permitted to close her eyes. These feelings heavily oppressed the Baron ; but Albert had a resource peculiar to his own position, which soon served to occupy his mind, and exclude any painful emotion. The position of his brother rendered his escape a matter of

certainty and of ease. It was settled that he should accompany the Baron as one of his suite ; and the hope was held out by this happy change of circumstances, that he might, one day, perhaps at no great distance, have the happiness of once more seeing Louise, whose constancy he never for a moment doubted, and who now less than ever could have any difficulty in uniting her lot with his.

There was much care and delicacy required in breaking the whole of these things to Emmeline, or rather in apprising her of as much as it was deemed right she should know. Her strict religious opinions, and her habitual feelings of warm piety, which formed a part of her whole nature, never a moment absent from her thoughts, precluded the possibility of informing her that her newly-found uncle had left the order he belonged to, though the Romish faith, to which she so strictly adhered, was stated to have been abandoned by him on a full and sincere conviction which operated upon his conscience and left him no choice. The rest of his history, excepting the unhappy cause of his flight, was fully recounted by him. She believed his wanderings to have originated in the circumstance of his conversion, and she never wearied in listening to

the strange adventures which he related on their journey, and the descriptions which he gave of far distant countries, their singular manners, and their romantic scenery. Upon points of controversy she never would touch with him. When he once or twice endeavoured to approach the subject, she firmly, though with her wonted gentleness, declined it. Satisfied herself, she desired not to re-convert him; while she sincerely respected his conscientious convictions, she had no desire to have that faith shaken which made the solace of her life; for she wisely judged that in this, as in other things, it is good to leave well alone, and she thought it might be dangerous to touch the opinions held on the forms, the discipline, and the ritual of religion, lest the substance also should be invaded.

On some subjects, however, which had a relation to these high matters, and, unknown to her, came very near Albert's case, they discoursed, reasoning with the same freedom from all restraint which characterized the relations between her and the Baron—relations of familiarity and affection which were soon extended to her newly-acquired kinsman. Thus, as they passed through Lyons, the case of a nun being mentioned who had quitted her convent and

fled, under the protection of a cousin soon afterwards married to her in Switzerland, Emmeline expressed her decided reprobation of this conduct, and would not listen to the defence which Albert, naturally enough, urged with some little warmth, alleging that the poor girl was converted to the Reformed faith. "No doubt," said Emmeline; "and she found, I dare say, many very convenient reasons for conversion, and for liberating herself from her vows."—"But, my dear Emmeline," said Albert, "do you approve such vows?"—"I am far from approving them," she answered, "and I think, with many sound and orthodox divines, that our Holy Church has been too easy in giving such vows countenance and support. But though it may be ever so wrong to make these vows, once made they must be kept. The annoyance, the restraint of keeping them, is the consequence of the rash act of making them."—"How do you hold of such (for there are many) who have been drawn or compelled into taking the cowl or the veil?" "Why, my dear Secretary" (he travelled as filling this place in the Baron's train), "that is not the question. No one pretends that this young person did not enter into the holy state with her eyes open. However, I don't hesitate to say that, had I been even compelled

to make my profession, as I must have done so after all with my eyes open to the step I was taking, I should have held it to be only the consequence of that act that I should perform my vows. Even had I been what you call compelled, and even if compulsion could here have place, I should so have judged. The other case you suppose of a fraud, of a dupery, is quite different ; that binds nobody ; it assumes that the vow never was made.”—“I fear, my love,” said Albert, “you will have, on your strict principles, to go a step further, and consider a promise binding which is extorted by force.”—“Why, I do go that length, dear Secretary. If I, under fear of death or other extreme mischief, gave a solemn promise, I should reckon the fulfilment of it to be the price I paid for my escape. I should think it a misfortune ; but so it was my misfortune to be exposed to the threat of violence. A consequence of that is the keeping my promise. If I break it, there is fault as well as misfortune.”

The more Albert saw of this engaging person, the more he was struck with her. The perfect justness of all her reasonings, and the undeviating rectitude of her feelings, could only be surpassed by her delightful manners and tender disposition. With her

he loved to renew those discussions, on subjects both of history and of taste, which he had found to possess such a charm while in the society of Father Jerome. He would relate to her the Father's critical opinions, and he found that no subject either of German, or Italian, or English poetry was new to her; for of these languages she was as complete a mistress as of her mother tongue. In discussing Dante, he found she held the same opinion with Father Jerome; but she rated Tasso higher than he had done. She admitted, however, his great inferiority to the great Florentine; and she gave Albert an instance even stronger than the famous addition to the lion in the Sordello. "Look," said she, "to his murder of those most exquisite lines in the Maestro Adamo, perhaps unequalled in their kind by any passage of the Divina Commedia. Not content with making the cooling and moistening rills that trickle down the Casentino dry up the thirsty, dropsical man, when he recollects them and has their image before his eyes, Tasso must needs make them heat as well as dry up; and worse still, as if to dispel the illusion of actually seeing them before his eyes, they are made to boil over *in his thoughts*.

‘L’asciuga, e scalda, e nel pensier ribolle.’

I really think Tasso only succeeds when he transports some phrase whole, and leaves it standing out from his own verse, without adding or changing at all, as

‘*Ambo le mani per dolor si morsie.*’”

When they came to descant on the great French preachers, with whom Emmeline was peculiarly familiar, he found that she did not view Bossuet as Father Jerome had done. She allowed Massillon to be superior, and to have done things far above the reach of the soft and mellifluous Bossuet; but she took much pleasure in reading the latter, and found his tenderness well suited to her own strong feelings on sacred topics.

While thus they discoursed, the time passed pleasantly, and the way was beguiled. In less than a week, making no haste, they travelled along the left bank of the Rhone to Lyons, and then ascended its right bank to Geneva. Here Albert found that the worthy pastor of St. Gingoulph had recently paid the debt of nature; having survived many years longer than he earnestly prayed he might do, his darling Emilie; but having also enjoyed the comfort of preparing himself better than ever for his great change by a life spent to the end in works of charity and acts

of devotion. The melancholy disposition of Emmeline, connected with her knowledge of the precarious tenure by which she held her own life, made it inexpedient to dwell on the mournful story of poor Emilie, which came fresh into Albert's mind when he visited the English chaplain and accompanied him to the grave, where a simple inscription noted the age of the deceased, and described her as "The humble follower of Jesus, and the constant friend of the poor." The pastor was buried at her side by his own desire; and his death had happened too recently to allow a stone to be erected over him.

The journey from Nismes, in which he felt easy and secure for the first time these seven years, had been delightful to Albert; and it was agreeable to Emmeline also, whom the novelty of his conversation, his engaging manners, and his singularly sweet temper, could not fail to please. The Baron had not felt so much at his ease: he had been separated from the friend whose attractions exercised so powerful an influence over him: but this was not the source of the melancholy which preyed upon him. Ever since he lost his companion and brother, Louis, he had felt all the blessings for which he was grateful to Providence were each in succession accompanied

with a bitter reflection—"Alas! *he* is not here to share what would have given him so much pleasure!" This journey with Albert was fitted to raise up such regrets at each step; to which might be added the unceasing source of his greatest anxiety, Emmeline's health, never becoming less delicate, but on the contrary rather giving more rise than in her earlier years to gloomy forebodings. Hence it was his fate to have his cup of enjoyment ever dashed with bitterness; and as Emmeline never appeared more delightful, or filled him with more pride than during this journey with her new kinsman, the Baron was proportionately downcast when the murky shadow flitted across him which he seemed to foresee would one day veil so much excellence from his sight.

CHAPTER VIII.

REVOLUTION—GENERAL AND PERSONAL.

THE Baron and his suite having passed through Switzerland returned to Flanders ; the other guests of the Château arrived at their several homes ; the Marquess and Marchioness continued to dispense among their dependents the blessings which a resident gentry affords, and among their neighbours the distinguished and distinguishing hospitality of Baginolles. The same party had agreed to re-assemble at the close of the ensuing summer ; and in the mean while public events did not linger in their progress. The States General assembled in May. The people of Paris were enchanted with the august solemnity of their public meeting. The plan of M. Necker having been adopted, no less than twelve hundred representatives of the three orders were convened, of whom six hundred were deputies of the commons, and the remainder represented the no-

bles and clergy. The minister's plan, his foolish plan, of leaving to the bodies themselves the determination of all other questions, was likewise pursued, and led, after a few weeks of fierce controversy, to the union of the three in one meeting, a narrow majority of the other two having been, chiefly by the violence of the multitude out of doors, induced or compelled to vote for this inauspicious junction. The Revolution, according to Lord Mornton's wise and sagacious prediction, was thus accomplished, and the Monarchy in effect subverted. What soon after followed might be regarded among the natural consequences of this cardinal error. But the excitement of the people, and especially of the Paris mob, broke forth in acts of violence. An easy prey to every rumour fabricated for the purpose of inflaming them, by working on the most suspicious temper of which the history of nations affords any example, and working also on an ignorance of all beyond the circle of the Parisian walls, hardly credible in the eighteenth century, those multitudes who had now begun to give over all other occupation but that of political agitation, were driven to and fro by their profligate or fanatical leaders—'t is hard to say which race is the most pestilent—and had already, before the

assembling of the States General, proceeded to the most unbridled excesses. Property had been pilaged, houses burnt, lives lost, before the ominous month of May set in. One act of violence after another ensued; and on the 14th of July the Bastille was attacked, and carried by storm. M. Necker, whom in one of its oscillating fits the Court had dismissed, was recalled, and soon found that while the mob rent the air with their shouts of exultation at his return to place, they were resolved to give him none of the power, without which place is a disgrace to him who holds it, and a curse to all under his rule. The Paris mob, now made regular—what was called *organised* in the jargon of the day, that is, disposed in clubs of agitators—ruled the Assembly by terror; and the Assembly did as it list, or rather, as the mob list, without the least regard to the minister.

Early in August the time had arrived for assembling again the delightful society of last year at the Château de Bagnolles. The Count and Countess were there as relatives of the family, some weeks before. The Chevalier had left France for England after the revolutionary movement of July, when it seemed no longer expedient for an Englishman to

remain in Paris; his son Ernest was glad, too, of an occasion for quitting the capital without giving rise to any suspicions against his patriotic dispositions; and he promised to let his father know how he found matters at his aunt's, on his arrival. The Chevalier Deverell accordingly was in anxious expectation of receiving a letter, and about the middle of August one reached him, dated the beginning of the month, but which had gone round by Yorkshire, whither he had been to visit a friend. He read with extreme interest, and in some annoyance, as follows:—

Château de Bagnolles, 2nd August, 1789.

“MY DEAREST FATHER,

“I LOSE no time in fulfilling the promise I made on parting with you a fortnight ago, after the alarming events which induced you to prefer an English to a French residence for some time to come.

“Yesterday evening I arrived here after dinner, and found our last year's party in a great measure reassembled. My aunt and her family received me with their wonted cordiality. All the company were distributed in their several parts of the salon so nearly as they used to be last year, that I could

almost have thought the interval of nine months had not been interposed, and that we were all as then the evening before the party broke up and dispersed. There was the Marquess playing at chess with the Count, in the recess as you go towards the library; there was the Marchioness with her book on the sofa between the parlour door and the great mirror; the governess and the *Sieur Gaspar* were looking over the new prints and maps for the school-room; the *Rev. Mrs. Leblanc*, as you used to call her, who is here on a visit, was walking about the adjoining part of the library, with a stranger, whom I had not before seen, a tall man of a most handsome and striking countenance, who seemed discussing with her some important matter, that both took great interest in. The Countess was reading the newspaper in the niche near the chimney-piece; and the Baron sat a little way off, neither reading nor talking, which, however, at the moment did not strike me as anything particular. I saw, in short, every one exactly as last year, with one exception. *Mdlle. de Moulin's* place near the small book-case was vacant; she was not there. I looked again at the Baron, and was going to ask whether she was unwell, as not unfrequently happened. Mercifully

I did not ; I perceived he was in deep mourning, and that his face was care-worn, as if he had lived not nine months, but twice as many years, since we last met. The dreadful suspicion instantly passed through my mind, and I dared ask no question. My aunt, who sat near, at that moment happened to raise her eyes from the book in her hand, and her look of sorrow and despair as she eyed first me and then the unhappy Baron, too eloquently told me all that remained—if indeed anything did remain to be ascertained. The vacant place gave my heart such a chill as I am unable to describe. I durst not again turn my eyes toward it.

“I cannot express to you the gloom which this sad event has cast over the whole society. There never in this world was a more delightful or more amiable person than Emmeline de Moulin. I say nothing of her wretched uncle, now the very picture of woe, but I speak only of herself. So much talent and so admirable an understanding—such a rare union of the qualities generally found the least capable of blending together, warm and quick feelings with calm and correct judgment—so much of heart with so much genius and information—such expansion of mind with such perfect innocence and sim-

plicity—that all this should have passed away, and left only our sorrow for its loss, is I really feel a severe dispensation! You will not wonder at my thus writing, because you know that all my Parisian nonsense used to be dissipated the moment Mdlle. de Moulin appeared, and that she exercised over me a kind of power wholly unaccountable, whether you regarded my nature or her own; my general hardness and carelessness (*insouciance*), or her habits and temper, which rendered anything like love-making or even ordinary admiration a thing as much out of the question as it would have been with my aunt or her children.

“ Well, when once such melancholy sentiments take hold of the imagination, they do not leave any portion of it unoccupied: I walked out before breakfast this morning, after thinking very much of what I have been detailing, both before I fell asleep and after I got up. I found myself walking among the lime-trees, beyond the terrace, after you pass through the pavilion, and I sat me down on a bench, beneath the shade of one of them. It instantly came into my mind that I last saw poor Emmeline on this very spot, and that she had gently chid me here for some stupid joke which I had made upon

her young friend, Mademoiselle Chapeley. You may recollect she never much liked any remark on the absent, but especially could not bear it on her friends. Just as I was saying to myself—How much would I give that she were here to chide me once more ! I heard the note of the small bird which frequents the lime-tree-walk—a shrill and plaintive note—as I had often heard it when she was there enjoying her favourite walk. I can hardly tell you the pang that this gave me. No one is so little given as I am to sentimental moods; no one cares less to have his mind led away from realities to such painful sufferings or indulgences, call them which you will. But it was too much for me; I was fairly overcome, whether from having slept ill, or been fatigued with my journey, or having eaten nothing since I rose, or whatever be the cause, I caught myself fairly moved to tears, and was exceedingly glad to find, upon looking round, that I was unobserved. Had the Countess, or indeed any one that knew me, observed what was passing, it is my belief they would have thought I either had been drunk over-night, or was deranged this morning. I, of course, soon recovered myself.

“ At breakfast we all again met, except the Baron.

He has only been here these three days, and my aunt (who indeed mourns over Emmeline as if she had been her own) tells me that he has been unable to bear the morning meeting as yet. He used every day, after breakfast, to lead his niece into the portico, and there to converse with her on their little plans for the day, of reading, or walking, or driving, and the Marchioness says that this recollection is stronger than for some days he may be able to bear. You know the pride, not to say haughtiness of his nature. He is as high in his affliction as in any other concern of his life. My aunt tells me no one dares approach the subject to him, within a hundred leagues. He is entirely sullen, silent, and reserved. But his looks he cannot command; he is an entirely altered man, and if he ever smiles, it is like the grin of a death's head. His coming here, the Marchioness says, was an immense exertion, and was imposed upon him by his brother, as a kind of duty, in the belief that it might tend to banish the sorrow he was secretly and silently pining under. You know she is somewhat of the most innocent in worldly matters—like poor Emmeline;—and she never seems to reflect that the dearly beloved Countess is here, whom the Baron durst no more

have disobeyed, when commanded to attend, than he durst the commands of his lawful sovereign the Emperor Joseph.

“ Well—that same brother of his, whom I mentioned, as the only one of the party I had not seen before. He is truly a most remarkable person. First and foremost, the handsomest man, without exception, I ever saw ; and herein as little like the dear Baron as may be—but a man of great accomplishments, extensive travel, and various knowledge. Lastly, one whose conversation is singularly agreeable—having great suavity with much fire, a ready wit, and a good capacity for reasoning. He has, however, some of the particularities of the family, and he consented to accompany the Baron, upon condition that he should be allowed to occupy his own apartment in the Château, and only join the party when the family were alone. He is, it seems, a Protestant, and having come down in the evening, without knowing Madame Leblanc was there, she seized upon him, as he was about to retire, and making the Marchioness present him to her, began a controversial discussion with him, which he could not avoid, but fled from to his own chamber, as soon as he had an opportunity of escape. It seems

to me, from one or two things I have incidentally observed, that there is a good deal of mystery attending these two brothers, and this younger one especially. He is very intimate with Chatillon, who quite swears by him; the Countess too extols him about as much as she does the Baron; but neither the one nor the other can give me much information respecting either brother, or if they can, they certainly prefer keeping it for their own private and separate use.

“ I have, in the course of the morning, seen only those I mentioned at the beginning of my letter. The gossip of the place I can give you but a slender report of, having only seen your reverend friend for five minutes in the portico, before the company assembled after breakfast. She availed herself of that limited space to lament the poor Baron’s loss. ‘ And,’ said she, ‘ misfortunes never come single. He came here to be comforted by meeting the Countess, and he finds he has lost her too.’—‘ Lost her?’ I said, ‘ What can you mean?—’ ‘ Oh they are manifestly two;’ she replied. ‘ Not that he cares a straw, I imagine, for it seems he suffers so much, that he cares little what now may befall him. Nevertheless, I cannot excuse her taking this

opportunity of throwing him over.'—'But,' I said, 'I don't believe one word of it. The thing is utterly impossible!'—'Quite possible,' said she, 'and quite true.'—'But what account do you give of it?' I asked; 'there must be some cause.'—'Oh, I conclude she has found him a successor. He was not her first love, and is not very likely to be her last.'—I need hardly tell you that this last matter—this explanation—must be false, whether the rest of the story be true or not. I came as near the subject as I durst venture with herself; but, owing to an accident I need not trouble you with, she hates me so cordially, that she never even tries to conceal it, and she would hardly speak to me with common civility, when I asked some question respecting her friend, the Baron. With himself, of course, I did not venture to approach the subject. My observation, therefore, as confirmatory of the tale put forth by her 'who thinketh no evil,'—that she does not speak out, is confined to the remark that I have not seen the two bosom friends take their accustomed walk to-day, and that they did not read together in the library during the morning. Possibly they may resume their studies after dinner.

"We are all here, in as much anxiety as you may

suppose, for the next accounts from Paris. The wise predictions of Lord Mornton are fulfilled to the very letter, and in all their particulars. Revolution is fairly begun; where it is to end, or whither it is to go, wiser heads than mine must determine. I find the spirit of the people in Languedoc and Provence is to the full as bad as in any part of the north—indeed, from all I hear, it is even worse. The accounts from Orange, Marseilles, Toulon, are truly alarming; but nothing can be much worse than our neighbouring town of Nismes. A most turbulent spirit prevails there; scenes of tumult ending in bloodshed have already been acted; the Catteaus are full of hopes, activity, and fury, with a ferocious rabble at their heels; there have been attacks on the châteaux and on the persons of some proprietors, though not in this immediate neighbourhood; but at Nismes, I hear, there are clubs established on the model of those begun in Paris, and that persons are denounced for political offences; that private grudges are at work in many cases to have men's spite gratified under the mask of patriotic enmities; that even secret information is received by agitators, and acted upon by their mobs; and of one thing I am sure,—that if the

rabble knew what a thorough-going aristocrat your humble servant is, no hiding-place in this Château would be dark enough or fast enough to screen him from them, and prevent him assisting the illumination of the place by ascending the lamp-post (*lanterne*).

“Your affectionate son,

“ERNEST.”

The first news which arrived at the Château after Ernest came, was that of the memorable 4th of August, a day wholly unexampled in the history of governments; and by governments we mean the deeds of a regularly established power regularly acting in the management of the affairs intrusted to their care; but not, perhaps, without example in the history of the violent revolutions, and the sudden convulsions which the moral, as well as the natural world sometimes undergoes. In one night sixteen laws were passed by acclamation, and with hardly any discussion at all, each of them of great, most of them of the greatest importance; altering the whole civil polity of the country, changing the relations of society, violating the most valuable rights of property, placing the whole ad-

ministrative system upon a new foundation. Many of these laws were improvements of the utmost value; almost all of them were fit to be in some shape or other introduced; but their sudden, hasty, wholesale adoption without any regard to details, without the least care to prevent serious injustice in their operation, and without the shadow of consent from those great bodies whose interests they affected, consent to be asked by previously consulting them, or at least informing them of the intended measures, was a course of headlong and precipitate action which deserved not the venerable name of legislation. The abolition of all that was oppressive in feudal rights, the equalizing of all public burthens, the vesting in one central body the imposition of all taxes, the cessation of all provincial states, and the conversion of the clergy from a proprietary into a stipendiary body, were the principal measures, all of the utmost benefit to France, thus carried by the violence of the moment, and which no subsequent deliberation could alter and modify.

But, although in the excitement of the day, the leading nobles and dignified clergy at Paris had rushed forward to make these great sacrifices, the same enthusiasm was very far from prevailing in

the provinces among the classes whose property had thus been given away. In Languedoc there was not the least disposition even to acquiesce; and the nobles, finding that the peasantry were deluded into the notion, not perhaps, very unnatural after what had passed in the capital, that all rent was to cease, and that all common land was given up to them, broke out into disorders still more violent than they had lately committed, and obliged the landowners to arm in their own defence. The Marquess de Bagnolles, though he cheerfully bore his part in this resistance, to which the country owed its escape from universal anarchy, yet never ceased to cast the blame of the commotions which had rendered such defensive operations necessary, upon the precipitate measures of the National Assembly; and he plainly saw that now it was vain to think of arresting the progress of Revolution.

“I find,” said he as he returned from the meeting held to take steps for a general arming, “I find that the most unmixed delight has been given at Nismes to the violent party by the late proceedings. There is now a confident expectation entertained of an entire change in our monarchy.”—“That hardly surprises me,” Ernest observed, “for how and

where are men to stop who thus begin? What chance have we of nobility, of orders of knighthood, indeed of any distinction of rank being maintained after what has passed with respect to all feudal privileges?" The Count did not view the matter quite in the same light; but a remark of the Baron, who sat silent and as if absorbed in the book he was reading, but had listened to the conversation, seemed worthy of great attention. "The Tiers Etat have been persuaded into giving up on their part their only chance of being ennobled; for the sale of parliamentary and other judicial places is abolished with the feudal rights. Depend upon it the Commons never would have agreed to this had a month's time been given for reflection." "And, pray, what do you infer from hence, M. le Baron?" said Mdme de Chatillon, somewhat contemptuously. "I infer, Madame," said he, "what I presume any one of ordinary understanding, who gives himself the time to reflect, and does not prefer the easy success of a tranchant remark to the trouble of seeking after truth, would naturally infer, that the Commons being the powerful body will indemnify themselves for the involuntary sacrifice, in the most obvious quarter, that is to say, by levelling all

ranks.”—“That, in short,” said Ernest, who perceived the profound reasoning of the Baron, “unable any longer to rise up to our rank, they will bring us down to their own.”—“And, after the night of the Fourth,” added the Baron, “why should I doubt that the privileged orders will be themselves forced to propose the change?”—“All extremely deep and far-sighted, I make no question,” said the Countess; “we ordinary mortals don’t see so long before us.” “Countess,” said M. de Moulin, in a tone somewhat severe, and with a sardonic smile, which had anything rather than an amiable effect, “Countess, possibly you ordinary mortals would find your sight longer if you had experience of affairs, as well as much study, and had learnt the lesson of endeavouring to profit by these opportunities.” So saying he left the portico, where the party were assembled, and took a walk alone upon the terrace.

Ernest plainly perceived that there was much foundation for his former suspicions; these two friends were no longer on their former footing; and he found in the course of the evening that Madame de Chatillon, when she ventured upon a remark to the Baron, did so with much hesitation, and was answered with that immeasurable superiority of

which he was as conscious as the others were aware, no longer bending to her authority as her inferior, nor indeed, at all affecting to treat her as his equal. She seemed to be exceedingly ill at her ease, and Ernest saw, but had no means of divining what, that something very desperate and perverse must have taken place between them so entirely to alter their mutual relations. The Baron's state of mind would not in any manner of way explain the change. In affliction men cling to any friendly support, rather than abandon their attachments ; and being of a good heart himself, Ernest believed both that the Baron would seek and that the Countess would be inclined to yield him that kind of solace. Hardened as he was by the ways of the world, he still could not conceive the likeness of anything in the female form taking this opportunity to abandon her former friend—yet something, he could not tell how, or what, must have happened between these two. Of one thing he was quite certain, Madame Leblanc's doctrine could not be true. He had far too extensive and accurate a knowledge of the female nature to doubt that her love for M. de Moulin was a kind of caprice, or wandering from her accustomed path ; he believed it had never gone far in this instance ; he was quite

certain it never had been repeated in any other ; and his conjecture from all he observed, was that it had, at least for the present, ceased.

Ernest was right in the main, though he saw imperfectly. He was right in believing that a change had come over the friends, and that no new attachment had caused it. He was not quite correct in his view of the fair lady's disposition. His knowledge of female nature had been limited to ordinary samples of the sex. Of the species to which Madame de Chatillon belonged, fortunately not a numerous family, he had as yet had no experience. That which he conceived impossible for anything in the female form to accomplish had been perpetrated ; but only the form of the party was female—and what lurked beneath that fair form ? Was it fury or was it fiend ? or was it only a human nature exposed to strong gusts of passion, and drawn on from step to step by chances that presented opportune suggestions, after the perilous discipline of familiar contemplation ?—This, however, if it may explain, never shall be suffered to excuse ; for this is the way in which the Great Fiend of all works.

The long absence which the Countess had feared might relax the Baron's attachment, if not wean

him from it, had proved much more fatal to her own. In him the passion of love was natural, not to say habitual; in her it was now first felt, and it found no easy or convenient harbour in her bosom. The pride which formed the great feature of her character was offended, because it was lowered by it; and therefore, never having easily suffered its entrance, was exceedingly watchful for an opportunity to expel the intruder. The stings of remorse, however, were added to the wounds of pride; they were indeed far less powerful; and she often represented to herself the feelings she endured as emotions which were only pride. Still remorse did operate sometimes and somewhat. Yet the master passion was pride; its wounds gave the real pang. The accident of which she had so fatally become aware, that had put Ernest in possession of her secret, continued to give her unspeakable pain, and as, from his known opinions of the sex, the fruit of his equally well known experience, she had no doubt that he believed matters to have gone much farther than she ever intended they should; she could also entertain no doubt that he was ready any day to exhibit her, if not generally among his idols, at least to the goddess of the day, in colours for laying on

which she felt her conduct had given an authority. The knowledge that she was in the power of two men, both men of the world, was more than she could endure. Aloof from all intimacies she had no confidant, and took no counsel. One friend, if she had possessed such a treasure, might have soothed her, and reconciled her to her position; another of an opposite caste of mind might have advised her to break off all connexion of the kind. She formed the latter resolution of herself, in a temper of mind which arose partly from wounded pride, partly from awakened conscience, and in no small degree also, from dread of discovery, however determined she was that there should be no actual guilt to find out. That which made it possible for her to form first, then to execute such a resolution, wholly beyond her force a few weeks ago, was the effect produced by absence in relaxing her attachment. Her love for the Baron was contrary to her nature and habits, and when they were separated, and she could not look forward to a renewal of their intercourse for many months, she found it possible, without any great effort, to get the better of her passion, and she was effectually cured.

About a month before Chatillon had determined

to revisit Languedoc, she heard of the cruel blow that had fallen upon her friend and laid him prostrate. His letter was short, but it expressed all. He was alive; he unhappily was well and likely to bear about the burthen of an existence become utterly wretched. He hastened to tell her this, noways doubting of her sympathy, though not a tender word did he mingle with his phrase, not an approach did the few lines of his letter indicate, to any other feeling save that which might well be expected to fill and to master his soul. By a contradiction common to women, and which one little like the rest of her sex could yet exhibit, this letter, though it excited little sympathy, staid for awhile the execution of her purpose. She felt less able to abandon her friend and cast away her passion, when she thought for a moment that he too had been cured. Instead of writing to him, therefore, she reserved the communication of her resolution till they should meet at Bagnolles, and for awhile she inclined to withhold that communication until she should have ascertained that his love burnt with as fierce a flame as before; nay, she did not exactly know if her own might not be re-kindled should his be found to have died away.

They arrived at Bagnolles,* a week before the Baron. When he came, she found him sullen and reserved to others and refusing to confess that he suffered; dejected in her company, but as affectionate as ever. The momentary partial renewal of her passion ceased; and in answer to his declaration that the hope of again meeting her had been the only gleam his mind had been enlightened by, and that he had now but one attachment remaining upon earth, she told him with a firm voice, and in a manner even haughty as well as determined, that all intimacy between them must cease, and that she had formed a resolution from which nothing could move her. This shock was more than the miserable man could well bear. Nor was its force lessened, by her replying, in answer to this remark, that he had really looked for sympathy from her instead of repulsion,—“If you mean pity, you should scorn it. For my part, I can’t bear to be pitied. I had rather be hated by far.”—With that she flung out of the room, determined to hear no more; and had she stopped to listen, she would only have heard muttered in an agony, “My God! what a woman!”

* The château, near Nismes; not the town on the Cèze which falls into the Rhone, nearly opposite to Orange.

He cast his recollection back, at this moment, to the very different person in whom his affections had centered, now torn from him by death. He was moved to tears as he had not been since his loss, when the contrast struck his mind. He had, without any blame to himself, suffered his mind to be once and again diverted from the sad scene before his eyes during her last illness; he had found relief by this distraction, and by resting his thoughts on what he fondly but vainly had been dreaming would prove a sympathizing bosom. He now bitterly upbraided himself for having suffered a single instant to pass with his attention removed from what was passing before him; it seemed to him as if he had deserted in thought the death-bed of her who before all the world continued now so unspeakably dear to him; and he could not avoid the feeling that he was justly punished for what yet was a natural, nay an involuntary offence—while he sighed out again, as he gazed on the door through which the Countess had flung, “What a woman! gracious heaven! Was it for her that I deserted, though only in thought and but for a moment, the dying hours of that sweet angel, while she was passing to her eternal rest?”

The cure of the Countess was certainly not more radical than this short scene had effected on the Baron. In the composition of the remedy there was less pride; there was some little remorse, though also less of this. But there were affections the most powerful and most lasting, as they were the most pure which could sway the heart, and these expelled his passion from it, at once and for ever, with the help of the discovery he had now made, that the other spirit was not kindred to his own.

It was not long before the Countess found how entirely this had been accomplished, nor was it long before she was doomed to feel the consequences of the change. Not merely there was no devotion to her—there was not the ordinary submission of a man to a handsome and a distinguished woman. Not only there was no intimacy—almost all intercourse had ceased. For a day or two her pride kept her up, her spirit supported itself; and possibly so might it have done had she been alone in the Château with M. de Moulin. But she had now to bear the change which all perceived in his manner towards her, and above everything else in his apparent estimate of her authority and her reasonings, her fancies and her opinions; and as she had now the

means of judging how much of his former deference had depended upon her real merits, so also had every one else access to the data upon which the same calculation proceeded; all could now make the deduction of amorous devotion from the sum total of the submissive respect paid, and tell to how much the remainder really amounted. It was not very agreeable for herself to work this question in subtraction; it was still less pleasant to observe others occupied with the same exercise of vulgar arithmetic.

The strength of the hatred that arises from the transmutation of love is proverbial. She now detested him she had but lately loved; and no day passed without giving herself and the rest of the party a variety of examples whereby to learn the same easy and elementary rule; for she got to be exceedingly restless under the irritation of her present position: she could not avoid rushing into conversations, however moderately she might be qualified for grappling with the subject. She had been spoilt by admiration, and had lived upon it; and, like a princess, had not been enough accustomed to the more homely and wholesome diet of unpalatable truth. Hence she fell into the error of thinking

that a sentence, or a jest, or a fine look, or a gracious smile, can carry things; and omitted the consideration that knowledge, and the wisdom coming from practical experience, always win the day in the long run; but in the hands of a dexterous combatant carry away the victory at once, and leave the lighter artist floundering and laughed at.

One day the conversation had turned on the state of the market for land, and the thousands of estates intended for sale and no purchasers offering for them. Madame de Chatillon, in answer to the Marquess, who held this a fatal symptom of the revolutionary rule, said, "Why, no one has seen England flourish the less for her Revolution last century, and the Civil War some years before. No doubt property changed hands then as now."—"There being," observed the Baron, "very certainly no change whatever in the distribution of property either at the one period or the other."—Some one spoke afterwards most justly of the influence exerted by the Clubs and the Galleries over the proceedings of the Assembly. Her eyes sparkled at the prospect of regaining her advantage. "I suppose," she said with a haughty sneer, "there are no Whig Clubs in England, and no Galleries in their House of Commons."—"As-

surely, Madam," the Baron quietly replied, "none, nor anything like it. The Whig Club is a private association of persons of rank, which never debates at all; and the Gallery of the House of Commons is cleared at the desire of any single member: no one is allowed to utter a whisper during its discussions."—"Well, well, it may be so; women are apt enough to be led away by a word being the same, as children will look through a telescope, holding it the wrong way, and wonder to see it reflect diminished instead of enlarged objects." "I suspect neither women nor children are very likely," said the Baron, "to see such a telescope as you mention reflect anything at all."—"Why, how so, Baron? There is no getting you to admit anything, either fact or comparison. Does not every one who has a looking-glass, and is not ugly enough to dread, using it" (looking archly at her quondam friend) "know as well as I do that the glass reflects?"—"Certainly not, Madam, it is the quicksilver behind it that reflects, the glass transmits only and protects the metal; not to mention that, if the glass reflected ever so much, this would not prove that there was any the least reflection in such a *refracting* telescope as your ladyship spoke of. However, I beg your

pardon," he added, feeling he pursued her too close, "I was wrong to set you right; it was not worth disputing about." There was something in the mingled scorn, indifference, and almost pity, with which this was both sounded and looked, that proved far more intolerable than any of his exposures which preceded. She bit her lip in a manifest agony of mortification; and, taking a book in her hand, retired from the portico.

CHAPTER IX.

THE END.

WHILE these things were transacting in the public society of the Château, Chatillon passed much of his time with Albert in his own apartment, or in rambling over the forest; sometimes visiting together the cave where their acquaintance began, sometimes going among the peasants in the neighbourhood, or the foresters who lived in the woods, hearing their opinions of passing events, and inquiring into the condition of their families. The Marquess, though an excellent landlord, yet had estates so extensive that much of their management was necessarily devolved upon agents, and as the *Sieur Gaspar* was become old and less active than formerly, his subordinate functionaries were not always well looked after. Many valuable hints were therefore given by these two friends to the benevolent and sensible owner of the domain.

But the Count, while conversing with Albert, always recurred to one topic, whether in their walks, or in their evening interviews at the Château. He could no longer see any reason for refraining from the attempt to bring off Louise, which he had in vain pressed before the discovery of his friend's relationship to the Baron. His circumstances were now comparatively flourishing. The unhappy calamity that had just befallen the family rendered their fortune much greater than their wants. No chance existed of his brother marrying; it was the very last thing he ever was likely to think of; nor could he have otherwise than the wish to see Albert united with Louise. Chatillon soon found that it was only his habitual submission to the Baron's will, and his feeling apprehensive of his displeasure, should a subject be broached which he had never himself come upon, that rendered Albert unwilling to take the course pressed upon him. His friend at once undertook to remove this difficulty, and begged the Countess to take an early opportunity of bringing the whole before her friend, as Chatillon still supposed him. She gave, however, the most peremptory refusal to interfere in any way, and expressed an entire indifference to the "lovers, Don Alberto and

Donna Luigia," as she termed them, laughing not a little at the romantic adventures of Chatillon's "dear friend," their friendship furnishing constant food for her merriment. He was thus obliged to broach the subject himself with the Baron, and he found not the least disinclination to the proposal, only a positive desire that, considering his own station, he should in no way be mixed up with any step which might be taken.

The Count having now obtained Albert's full assent, proceeded to lay his plans, and he did so with the greatest judgment. He was to go, without any attendant whatever, to cross the Rhone near Orange, and then proceed by the diligence to Avignon, so as not to have the appearance of coming from Nismes, the inhabitants of which labour under general suspicion in the Contât. He was to take up his position at once in an inn of the town, and from thence to reconnoitre the persons of the Orange family. He was provided with a letter from Albert, and his first object must of course be to have this safely conveyed into Louise's hands. Never having seen her, he could only make inquiry respecting her habits, or, which he much preferred, watch about the door of Madame Orange's house, in order to see her

come out. He did not venture to trust any one whom he might bribe to deliver the letter. But after waiting two days, he at length saw her enter a carriage with her mother, and from the description, he had not the least doubt of her identity. He watched another day, in the hope of her walking out, but he could only see her at the window for a moment. He instantly looked up, and held the letter in his hand. A few minutes afterwards her maid came down, and into her hands he delivered it, with a note from himself intimating that he should be ready to meet and to save her at six next morning, outside the gate, on the road leading to Orange. He went there in a close carriage which he had hired at the hotel, and she came by the time appointed. He ordered the postillion to drive off at a quick pace, and was perceived and stopped by a guard of the Vice-legate, or deputy governor residing at Avignon. The man was insolent, but Chatillon put a purse of silver in his hand, and in a minute he had galloped off to Orange. The journey was speedily performed, the river was crossed, the Avignon carriage dismissed, and in a few hours the fugitives were safely landed in the Château, no one having been able to tell which road they took after

Orange ; for the Count had the foresight to station his own servant at a country inn out of the main road from the Rhone, and they went thither, a distance of above a league, on foot, when they got into his carriage, and finished their journey. It was settled that Louise should come to the old steward's house in the wood, in order not to commit the Marquess and Marchioness. She was to remain there for two days, till their plans were arranged.

The meeting of the two lovers was exceedingly affecting. Louise at length found her friend safe from all immediate personal risk, powerfully protected, and amply provided for. The contrast between his present situation, and the circumstances in which they last had met, a year and a half before, came forcibly into her mind, and she devoutly prayed for grace to make her both thankful for such blessings, and rightly and moderately to enjoy them. Albert, though his spirits continued much affected by his recent loss, and though his present enjoyment was disturbed by the ever-recurring sigh of reflecting that poor Emmeline could not share their felicity, yet deeply felt the happiness for which he had so mercifully been reserved, and only had to keep down the alarm that from time to time would

intrude of other terrors still being in store to dash away from his lips a cup so sweet, but so lately tasted. The Baron was pleased with Louise, and desired to have the marriage hastened with all convenient speed. But Albert, after much reasoning on the subject, judiciously preferred travelling with her to Flanders, and being there married at a convenient distance from both the Contât and Nismes. It was, all the time of the discussions, a cruel thought, ever present to the Baron's mind, that she was no longer here whose judgment on all points would have been consulted, and whose wishes on all points have ruled. Indeed, time seemed to have none of that healing influence which it is so common to speak of. Stunned with the blow that felled him to the ground, he had at first not felt its full force. He now experienced what it was to suffer in every feeling of the heart, and at every moment of time.

The Countess gave herself little concern in all these transactions. Wholly engrossed with her feelings respecting the Baron, whom she now regarded both with hatred, and distrust, and alarm ; she could only think of the unconnected expressions which she had at different times heard drop from him upon the effect which he knew the loss of Emmeline, a

calamity always haunting his gloomy imagination, would be sure to have upon the tone of his mind. He was wont to say carelessly that he should probably survive it, because no one dies of grief any more than of love, but that it was his own fault if he survived it long. No one could compel him to lead a life of torment, and he had no family, nor indeed any person living, now his mother was taken from him, to whom his loss would prove an injury. She used to rally him for such views of futurity, and to say he surely was too proud to let the world see he had no power to endure calamity. "May be so! may be so!" he would reply, "but who pray told you that the world was to know it? I am quite equal to meet that difficulty, I promise you." Then she also brought to mind his way of speaking once when they were discussing in the portico the history of Themistocles, and his practice of carrying poison in a ring was mentioned with some incredulity. "For that matter," said the Baron, "I believe I could charge a much smaller ring than the ancient warrior's was, with poison enough to relieve any three men of their load of life." These, and such speeches as these, came constantly into her mind now, and as often as she saw him sitting with his eyes

fixed upon vacant space—or glaring at some page of a book for half an hour together, shewing that he saw not a letter of its print,—or caught him sitting idle, contrary to all his habits, and then suddenly begin to occupy himself as soon as he was discovered—or heard him when he forgot himself, or perhaps supposed no one nigh, heave a deep, convulsive sigh, and then on being observed, begin a kind of hysterical cough, she could not refrain from laying all he now seemed to undergo together with his former predictions and half threats, and to look forward to his speedily fulfilling them and putting them in execution; insomuch that her lively imagination, ever under the guidance of her wishes, and always running much before the event, made her ask eagerly about him as often as he was later than usual in entering the breakfast-parlour, or returning from his solitary walks in the forest, and still more when he went to Nismes, and remained till after the company had left the salon and retired to rest.

Day after day however passed, and nothing happened. The great fear of her existence and its most intolerable annoyance was the Baron; his death, she had worked herself up to believe, would take a load off her soul; would dispel the

cloud that hung over her existence. She longed for it far more impatiently than ever did expectant heir who is himself sinking into the vale of years while his predecessor lingers on the brink of the tomb long yawning to receive him ; till at last her mind was completely familiarized with this idea, and her impatience became such as would have been something ridiculous, had it not also been something horrid to think of. Her disappointment when young Deverell's accident proved unexpectedly trifling, was great, and it was little concealed. But this impatience now for what she called "a necessary relief, and the emancipation from intolerable thralldom, to which she was fully entitled," was tenfold ; it was all the more vehement, that it was mingled with a degree of rage and of constraint, of which in the former instance there had been hardly anything. It was then only fear ; it was now greater fear coupled with hatred and revenge.

While in this dreadful frame of mind, and just before Albert set out for Flanders, she one day came into the library, and perceived on the sofa in one of its recesses, the Baron stretched out fast asleep with a book half cut before him, and in his hand an open penknife. Unable to sleep well at any time, and

now nearly a stranger to that refreshment in the night, he not unfrequently fell into a slumber after his walk was over in the course of the morning. The family were all gone to Nismes ; and she knew she was alone in the house ; she suddenly saw how a wound inflicted with a knife, such as to produce instant death, would be ascribed to his own hand, when he was found in that posture, and when his frequent conversations on self-destruction were coupled with the present state of his spirits, which all his efforts to conceal what passed within him had never succeeded in preventing the company from fully perceiving. She hurried to Chatillon's room for a razor ; she returned ; she found him still undisturbed ; he had never moved since she went ; she grasped the razor in her hand ; she looked round—and saw Albert who had come into the library during her absence, and who stood now clear of the division of the recess which at first concealed him from her view. She suddenly and with an hysterical laugh said she was minded to try the strength of the Baron's consistency in his own doctrines, by placing a razor within his reach, well assured, she carelessly added, that his life would be in very safe keeping, when committed to his own

hands. Albert fixed upon her his large and piercing eyes: he uttered not a word; she stood abashed and unable either to speak or to stir; the Baron was awake and knew not the subject of their discourse; Albert retired, but before he went, he shook his head slowly and significantly over against the Countess, on whom he continued to glare with his widely opened eyes. She left the room before the Baron had time to begin any conversation. But next morning when he saw Albert before his departure, he asked what Madame de Chatillon and he had been disputing about, and was surprised to hear his brother say, "I believe her to be nearly the worst woman in the world; why I only say nearly, I will tell you; I think her as bad as any one can be without being false." Nothing now much interested M. de Moulin; however, he asked what his brother could mean; and when told that, from what passed the day before, he verily believed she was seeking his life, "Oh, if that is all," said the unhappy man, "I am sure she is perfectly welcome. I defy her to be half so willing to take it as I am to give it. However," he added with an indifferent tone, "why should she be in such a hurry? Let her wait a very little time, and the pear will be ripe, and fall

into her lap of itself. I once thought that grief was a slow poison; my opinion is altered. I now feel, thank God, that it brings its own only remedy much quicker than I had believed."

The grief that such observations, and the calm, indifferent, and yet truly despairing manner in which they were made, gave Albert, could only be alleviated by the hurry into which his approaching departure threw him. He sincerely loved and indeed revered his brother, to whom he looked up as to a superior nature, and he felt the cruel blow which the loss of him would be to all the prospects he had begun to form of future happiness. But before he set out, it seemed absolutely necessary that he should take some steps for the Baron's protection. That any one, a woman especially, should have deliberately, or even suddenly under the influence of a momentary temptation, formed the wild project of murdering him with her own hands, and by an act of violence, seemed quite incredible. Yet that the idea had passed through her mind he could not for an instant doubt, and drugs might be used, or accomplices might be hired when no one was by to watch or to detect. He accordingly took the Marquess aside before he went, and explained to him

his apprehension, finding it quite in vain to make his brother attend seriously to the subject for a moment. The Marquess turned almost as deaf an ear to the representation as the Baron had done, and Albert departed with a heart full of anxious forebodings, though he really after all supposed it very possible he might be mistaken.

The scene which she had gone through in the library had thrown the Countess into extreme agitation. It had made her congratulate herself on the escape she had made; for she could not avoid feeling, that a moment later, and a deed would have been done, at any rate an attempt would have been made, of which a witness was unexpectedly present, and her character, if not her life, was then gone. She, however, experienced another effect of that scene, and of the part she had played in it. The second step had now been made towards blood-guiltiness. The first was her open, her almost avowed disappointment at Ernest's life being preserved last autumn; this had first made her familiar with the thirst for a fellow-creature's blood. The same thirst had again seized her in the instance of the Baron. Another step in her progress downwards had now been taken; she had all but slaked that

infernal thirst; she had committed murder in her heart, and murder with her own hand. When she reflected on these things, she was shocked—she stood aghast at the contemplation of her own image;—she started back from the gulf that yawned before her; but she speedily laid all these fears and all other feelings asleep by reflecting on the risk she ran, the certainty of ruin she called it, from both the Baron and Ernest. She was haunted day and night with the loss of the character she had so long maintained of being the only beauty of Paris that never had been even suspected; she figured to herself the sneers of some (over whom she had been wont to exult), hard to bear, and the pity of others more intolerable still; she hastily decided that she had no choice; she argued that self-defence required her to act; she put the question as between the destruction of these her relentless oppressors, and her own; and she concluded that the first law of nature gave her, the right, nay, imposed on her the duty, of providing for her own security, at all hazards and all costs. She resolved, however, to proceed henceforth with redoubled caution, and never to act herself when she could by any means safely use another hand than her own.

Ernest again gave his father a short account of what was passing at his aunt's, in all whose concerns the kind-hearted Chevalier took a great interest. "We have had here," he said, "a most agreeable, and indeed, a remarkable man, of whom I think I before made mention, a brother of the Baron. He is well read, and far-travelled, but he neither overloads you with his books nor his adventures, though willing enough to be asked as to either. In short, you would like him much; for he would not treat you as those lay-preachers do, of whom you complain that there is no escaping them, their brethren of the cloth being confined to both time and place. Apropos of that race, it is well for you that you dined not here yesterday. Courdemont opened a new vein, sprung an unexpected mine upon us. Well—you, after all, never really knew what he is made of. He is an accomplished genealogist, and I see you turn as pale as this paper at reflecting on the escape you have made, like a man who, in the morning, sees the precipice or the bottomless pool he had unawares passed in the dark. He got upon this endless topic yesterday with the soup, and I question if it was run out before the coffee. Charlemagne and Attila range themselves

like disciplined troops in his niches, when he goes out through the Couvelaunts and the Coryphines, and others, his ancestral walks. Be thankful for the special mercy of your escape. It is provoking that one cannot hate so learned, able, and honourable a man, as he deserves to be hated; but so it is, and this lies on one's conscience. The Baron is as when I last wrote. He tries to occupy himself with hard work, but it won't do. His brother, whose tender care of him resembles that of the most affectionate wife or child, says he never will be able to take the only cure, of hard labour, till he returns to Flanders, and has public duties to perform; and return he clearly will before many days are over; for between the lady and him all is over, most certainly. Not only is there no longer alliance; there is not even neutrality, hardly peace and common forbearance; nor does she seem aware how much better it would be to be quiet in the new circumstances. Her restless nature, her endless ambition, and her morbid pride, get her into constant struggles, and she has, of course, always the worst in the conflict. Her opinions, to judge by her way of talking, have undergone a great change; she has become quite a stout revolutionist; she is all for the popular

party; won't suffer a word to be said against M. Catteau, whom she terms a very clever and interesting young man; goes to Nismes to meet him, and hear the news from the Paris agitators, who are, she says, regenerating France; and speaks slightly of such plodders as the Chief Judge and M. Balaye, who are not worthy to be named in the same year, I suppose, with your Catteaus. You know she never can hope to meet this gentleman at her cousin's, for he long since forbade him the Château after some of his blood-thirsty speeches. To all we can urge on this topic, the fair stateswoman replies:— 'Other times, other maxims. We have outlived all that sort of thing.' The Baron, one day, drily said, we had as yet outlived them, but we might not long be able to say as much. The friendship of her husband for the Baron's brother is very remarkable; they seem to be quite inseparable. The Count went for a few days over to Avignon, upon some business, and his friend appeared to reckon the hours till he came back, wondering, each time any one arrived, what had become of Chatillon. The Count, again, is now in equal pain for the loss of the Fleming, who suddenly set off for his own country two days ago, not that Chatillon is as

nervous and uneasy as his friend had been during his absence, but this arises from his far more easy temper. The Fleming has all the fire and excitement of the South, which one could hardly have expected to see bred in the Low Countries."

This, alas! was one of the last letters poor Ernest ever wrote. The wish of the Countess, the daily and hourly wish, was at length gratified, and she was rid of one of the burthens that made her life hateful. But she was rid in awful circumstances, full of suspicion, and which led to tragical events. A number of anonymous letters had been received at the Château, warning its inmates of the proceedings which were going on in Nismes, and at Orange, between which two places there was constant correspondence, the mob being almost equally excited in both. The Marquess was warned to secure his Château from an attack, and to have his woods and outbuildings well watched, for fear of fire at this season, when all in the South is dried up by the heat. The Baron was probably deemed safe, as being a foreigner, and in high station under his own government, under Joseph the Second too, a favorite of the French regenerators, and termed by them, "*the Imperial Avant-Courier of the Great Revolu-*

tion." But Ernest, whose aristocratic habits and connexions were known, and who exposed himself by his venturing at all hours to ride about, and be seen everywhere in the town, was very positively told of his danger. One of the letters mentioned that he had been denounced at a club more than once; that information had been conveyed from the Château itself of his speeches, contemptuous towards the people and their leaders, and that Catteau had a friend there, and the people a friend, who let nothing escape. Young Deverell held all such anonymous hints very cheap, and would not alter his mode of living. The old steward provided guards for the forest, and had the peasants ready to answer the summons of the bell, in case the Château should be assailed. But Ernest would take no precautions, and indeed the Baron and the Count, when he consulted them, were much of his mind, saying there was no end of trouble, if you minded anonymous letters, which nine times in ten were written for the mere purpose of giving you that sort of annoyance. This, however, proved to be the tenth time, and the warning which was thrown away came from those who knew the facts. A furious mob, urged on by the Catteaus, against whom he was reported to have

dealt in sarcastic jests, set upon him as he rode proudly through the streets of the suburb next Bagnolles. He defended himself gallantly; then attempted to escape; he was hit with a large stone, thrown from his horse by the blow, which stunned him, trampled under foot by the multitude, and expired in a few minutes, after being carried into a cabaret, by a policeman, who saw the scuffle, but had no power to save him. The mob, that day, were masters of Nismes, and only dispersed upon the troops being called out, when later in the evening there was a threat of setting fire to a baker's shop, the master of which they had nearly beaten to death.

The Countess at first seemed elated with this sad intelligence, and retired to her own apartment, leaving the Baron and the Count to offer such consolation as they could to the unhappy young man's aunt. She bore her own part of the calamity with that pious resignation which her religious feelings and her habitual devotion made a second nature. But she sighed over the poor Chevalier, wrapt up in his son, declining in the vale of years, and unable, in his solitary state, and far off from his sister, to struggle with this most heavy affliction.

The Marquess felt strongly, but he also recollected Albert's parting speech concerning the Countess. He laid all the circumstances together ; the visits to Nismes, the new intimacy with Catteau, the anonymous letters hitting at least upon one truth, that Ernest had spoken lightly of the mob and its leaders, abusing Catteau by name. Gaspar had told him that he had observed Madame de Chatillon occasionally directed letters in a printed hand, which she never put into the post-bag, but carried them herself to all appearance. Above all, warned by Albert's suggestions, though slighted at the time, he had looked at the Countess when the sad intelligence arrived, and had perceived an unseemly animation light up her whole countenance. All taken together made him both believe Albert's former account, sharing his strong suspicions on that occasion, and made himself entertain a strong suspicion upon the present event. He never much liked his kinswoman, or rather his kinsman's wife ; he liked her now much less than ever ; and he fairly told the Marchioness that he cared not how soon she left the Château, and left them to their sorrow, which plainly she did not share.

But the Countess was doomed to suffering which

neither they nor herself had foreseen. As soon as the first excitement had ceased, an agitation which she understood not succeeded. In the evening, the men as usual met, the Marchioness keeping to her room. The Countess had thus a good excuse for also absenting herself. But her evening was spent differently from her wont; she was wholly unable to read or to write; her pen, as often as she took it up, fell from her hand; her eye, fixed on the page, saw not the words; on she read to the foot, and knew not a word she had read; she went to bed—she slept not; her eyes were hot and ached, but they would not close; she took a calming draught—it only made her wander and speak without coherence; she knew not what she said; she could not fix her mind for an instant on one subject, and when the morning arrived she seemed in a high fever. Chatillon sent instantly for advice; the doctor came, and pronounced that the fever would be of short duration. He proved to be right; and she was able to appear at breakfast in two days. It was, however, her turn now to receive anonymous letters, and one came which threw her into an agony of terror. It enclosed one which she had herself written in a printed hand, and plainly told her to send some money to the

writer, else he would let the Marquess know of her correspondence with the agitators. She had been seen to put a letter in the post-office; it had a printed direction; and thus her correspondence was traced. That letter contained an account of Ernest's political violence on all occasions. She saw staring her in the face all the horrors of a discovery; she sent the money required; she felt that she was the slave of the anonymous correspondent; and she now discovered that a woman may be guilty of even worse acts than having a lover.

Fear sometimes opens the eyes which have been closed to more worthy warnings. But her feelings were not naturally bad; they were not naturally callous; they were only perverted by ambition, and seared by pride. She now felt that the event which she had so wished for, so rejoiced in, was the source of unmingled grief and vexation, because it was the source of regret; she would have given worlds to be relieved from the load of that catastrophe for which she had sighed as the only means of relieving her from other, far lighter evils; she would almost have given her own life that Ernest were still alive. How lightly did she now think of all the risk she ran from his tongue! How little would she now care

if all Paris had witnessed what he had seen in the Orangery! How lightly did she now regard even the most criminal intercourse with the Baron, compared with the charge to which she was now exposed! One comfort, and one only, she had; she never could be grateful enough to Providence for the accident, which she had formerly considered one of the curses of her existence, the chance of Albert being in the library and saving her from a yet heavier load of guilt than now oppressed her soul.

But daily agitation now gave place to broken slumbers, or wholly sleepless nights. Her appetite was gone; her restlessness was a disease; her alternation of ceaseless talk or sullen silence excited general attention; her face was changed; the roses had forsaken her cheeks; her eyes were sunk and were restless, or were glazed in her head; she never remained a moment in one look, or in one posture. Chatillon, deeming that the fever had been ill cured, or was returning again, sent to Montpellier for the physician who had attended Madame de Bagnolles. He came, and at once pronounced it no case of fever, at least at present, though from certain symptoms he conceived that brain fever might be approaching. He ordered the most perfect quiet, and living in a

darkened room, and being kept low. He remained a day, and then returned to Montpellier. She in no way appeared to mend, and the doctor was sent for again. He now said, on examining the symptoms, that he had no longer any dread of cerebral illness ; but he inquired minutely into her former history, and especially wanted to ascertain if either she or any of her family ever had laboured under mental alienation. The answer was clear and decided in the negative. He then wanted to know if she had ever lost any child, or had any other affliction to prey on her spirits. He was told she never had a child at all, and no one knew of anything to afflict her, unless perhaps it might be the shock arising from Ernest's sudden fate. The physician said she always wandered upon something which oppressed her, and seemed alternately under great alarm or in much affliction. He ordered her to be most carefully watched day and night, and gave his opinion to the Count that her mind was seriously disturbed. It was a conclusion to which he had himself already come ; but he hoped that her natural faculties were so strong as to throw off this present malady. The doctor shook his head, and assured him that this was a feeble reliance ; for that it was less likely a strong

intellect should recover its tone than a feeble one, inasmuch as the illness must have been proportionably strong to affect it. Chatillon calmly said, "God's gracious will be done; but it is a grievous blow." He now for the first time in his married life regarded that as a blessing which he had ever deemed one of his greatest misfortunes—the having no children.

The unhappy woman grew worse and worse. Her mind was now entirely gone. She raved much of the Baron and Albert; but of Ernest she spoke with scarcely any intermission. Sometimes she was seized with fits of fury, more frequently she seemed under the influence of terror, and occasionally she would burst into tears. Once or twice she spoke of poor Emmeline; and the Marchioness was infinitely touched to hear her one day sighing and crying out! "Oh, Emmeline Moulin! Emmeline Moulin! What would I give to be at peace in your grave!"

Before this sad catastrophe had befallen his unhappy friend, the Baron had left the Château, and proceeded homewards. The letters from Albert announced his marriage having taken place, and that their happiness only wanted his presence to complete it. He felt, however, too miserable to

enjoy anything, and only set out mechanically because it was going to his home, to what he now called his wretched home. But at that deserted and melancholy home he never arrived. In the bed of the inn of Montelimart, he was found dead by his servant when he went to announce that the carriage was at the door. The man was closely examined by Albert when he brought to Brussels this melancholy intelligence. It seems the Baron had not been able to sleep even his usual moderate portion of time for two or three nights before he left the Château; and the servant had thought him more depressed than usual during the day on which they left Montelimart. He had even (a thing most rare with him, who never spoke to his servants) heaved a sigh as he sat down to his supper, and seemed to feel distressed at the thoughts of returning to his house near Brussels, where he should no more see his niece. He retired to rest at the usual hour; and the man saw no more of him till he found his corpse next morning in the bed stiff and cold. A phial was on the table close by the bed; it was empty, and had a kind of smell, the man said, not like laudanum, but more like bitter almonds.

Albert too clearly perceived that his brother had

terminated a wretched existence by swallowing one of those subtle poisons of which he would sometimes speak half seriously, half in jest. It was a severe affliction, but he could not upbraid himself with the neglect of any precaution against what he yet had always foreseen to be an event very probable; for he full well knew him not to be a man whom any precaution that could be taken would prevent from executing a fixed purpose.

This sad loss threw a gloom over the happiness of the new married pair. But at their age, in their circumstances, the spirits are buoyant. The Baron had left them his whole property; he had left them also the respect attached to his name; and they had before them a life which promised as much comfort as ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals, though at moments of enjoyment they would cast back a thought of sorrow at no longer having their beloved brother and niece to share it.

They had the better assurance both of the purity and the duration of their happiness, in the deep foundations of religion and virtue upon which it was built. In the sad events that had preceded and attended their union, they had lamentable examples before their eyes how frail are all the tenures of a mere

worldly texture by which sublunary felicity is holden. All that beauty and rank and talents could give had not been able to make Madame de Chatillon's prosperity secure, nor had her high spirit, animating too a frame naturally cold, been able to defend her against the insidious approaches of a passion which fervent piety in women most easily subdues. She had never, it is true, departed from the path of virtue in act or deed; no sooner was she roused to a sense of her danger than she turned her back upon the precipice that yawned close to her feet; and she might have been saved, had religion come to her rescue, from afterwards falling before other worse temptations against which she was less on her guard. But even in her earlier day she had approached far too near the brink. She had suffered the vanities of the world and the splendours of worldly success to entangle her in a connexion which her conjugal duty forbade; an attachment which, though sullied by no actual guilt, was yet pointed towards a guilty quarter, and had no meaning if to that consummation it did not tend. Her punishment had been signal and severe. Losing all self-esteem, she was haunted with the terror of losing also the esteem of the

world in which and for which she lived. Her better nature left her; her feelings became perverted; her moral sense was unhinged; she no longer gave to vicious actions their due shares of disapproval, of blame, of reprobation, of abhorrence. One idea alone filled her whole mind. One fear beset her. She was blind to every risk but one. She thought but of a single crime and a single shame. Had she been anchored to the Rock of Ages, she would in repentance have worked out the cure of that pain which she had brought upon herself, and not plunged into guilt incomparably deeper than any with which she could be charged—a greater guilt incurred to hide a lesser shame. Her punishment had again been dreadful. She was driven to madness by the tortures, the unbearable tortures of conscience wringing, as it does, and tearing the soul in all its most sensitive regions with sleepless terrors, with self-upbraiding to lacerate or to sting, with pity that only burning consumes the soul and never melts it, with the awful aspect of the dark future, and the unbearable glance of the Eye that is too pure to behold iniquity. Before this assiduous, this never-resting tormentor, her reason had fallen, and the pride of that match-

less understanding, once the admiration of the world, had been bowed to the dust, laid prostrate by the crimes to which an over-weening confidence in its powers had prepared the way.

There was another example before the eyes of Albert and Louise, which, though less striking and less terrible, yet touched them more nearly. The Baron, far less criminal, had not been without his share even of the Countess's guilt; and all their admiration of him could not conceal from their calm reflection that he too had sinned, that he too had been punished. Accustomed to regard men in the capacities in which he had worked with them, or governed them, or opposed them—as his tools, or his subjects, or his enemies—to be used, to be ruled, to be fought or be circumvented—he had far too little viewed them as his fellow-creatures; and however well disposed to promote their happiness or further their improvement in the mass, he had acquired the convenient and easily formed habit of considering them as bound, in return for his good offices towards the species, to contribute individually towards the gratification whether of his ambition or of his other passions. The code of his morality thus became exceedingly imperfect; it was a morality of the most

worldly and most relaxed description ; and though his vices were accompanied, they could not be redeemed, by many virtues ; his pride gave him the notion either that he was above all temptation or that when he yielded there was no cause for shame or necessity for repentance. But he had fixed all his purer affections upon one object ; their wounds had been the bane of his life ; their final disruption he had been unable to survive. So strong a mind as his sank under the blow from which feebler natures daily recover ; and unsupported by true piety, though far from being an irreligious man, he had quitted voluntarily the post which his Maker has assigned him. Albert sometimes upbraided himself with having made no attempt at ministering consolation to his brother from the only source whence it can be drawn so as to possess a healing virtue. But a conviction that with such a nature such a trial would be hopeless, had always withheld him from what plainly was a vain effort. He felt, too, deeply impressed with the reflection that there was one passage in his story to which his brother might well refer as worse than any portion of his own ; a passage which no length of time nor any variety of enjoyment was ever likely to erase

from his memory, or to let him feel that it had been sufficiently atoned either by repentance or by amendment of life.

If the contemplation and the recollection of these things were calculated to give him pain, there was one subject to which he never could recur without the most delightful though the most tender and melancholy impressions. He would describe to Louise his niece's perfections, dwell on her genius, her sense, her purity, her resignation, her saint-like but charitable piety, with unceasing rapture, and would oftentimes exclaim, that surely if ever an angel visited this earth, it was Emmeline Moulin.

THE END.





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